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ABSTRACT

A series of workshops on parent involvement is intended to help teachers of emotionally handicapped (EH) students work effectively and collaboratively with parents. Six workshops address the following separate topic areas: (1) variables which concern families whose children have been diagnosed and placed in EH programs (e.g., changing schools, safety concerns, negative modeling); (2) rights and responsibilities of parents and teachers with regard to the individualized education program (IEP); (3) a model for involving parents in the education of their EH child (needs assessment, selection of goals and objectives, implementation of activities, evaluation); (4) guidelines for parent involvement (sensitivity to the uniqueness of families, helping parents become problem solvers, collaboration, IEP participation); (5) facilitating parent-teacher collaboration through a variety of information-sharing activities; (6) strategies for relating to parents in difficult situations (e.g., dealing with parents who are angry, uninvolved, or need counseling). Sample activity forms, handouts, and overheads are included, as well as lists of readings and resources where appropriate. (JW)

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT TRAINING MODULES

Division of Special Education
Indiana Department of Education

Indiana Committee on the Emotionally Handicapped
Shirley J. Amond, Chairperson

June 1987

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Under the leadership of the Indiana State Advisory Council on the Education of Handicapped Children and Youth, the Indiana Committee on the Emotionally Handicapped has continued its efforts to resolve those issues which inhibit the development of programs for seriously emotionally handicapped students.

This publication is the result of the cooperative efforts of many individuals. Those individuals have contributed time and shared their expertise toward the completion of this activity.

To all those who served on the committee, a special note of thanks is expressed. The sharing of information and personal skills in the research, writing, and editing of this publication is deeply appreciated.

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Preface

Effective communication between home and school is essential to successful programming for students with emotional handicaps.

The purpose of this document is to make available a series of workshops on parent involvement. It provides teachers instruction in various components which impact on parents' acceptance of the diagnosis and placement of their child. Further, it provides guidelines for cooperative participation in the development of individualized education plans. It also focuses on models and guidelines for involving parents in school related activities. Finally, the document includes a workshop on how to effect conflict resolution with parents.

Definition

The following definition of a seriously emotionally handicapped child will provide you with a description of the type of child with whom you will be working.

A seriously emotionally handicapped (SEH) child is a child with a severe condition exhibited over a long period of time to a marked degree which adversely affects educational performance and is characterized by one or more of the following: (a) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors (including children who are autistic); (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) an inappropriate type(s) of behavior or feeling under normal circumstances (does not include children who are only socially maladjusted); (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Indiana Rule S-1
P.L. 94-142

In general, an emotionally handicapped student has problems involving lack of awareness and/or understanding of self and environment of such duration, frequency, or intensity as to result in an inability to control, behavior or express feelings appropriately, thereby significantly impairing performance in the classroom and in school-related activities. The general characteristics include one or more of the following:

(a) <u>an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors (including children who are autistic)</u>.

Significant deficits in the level of functioning may be the most pronounced characteristic of emotionally handicapped children in school. This significant deficity in the learning process may be manifested as impairments in classroom performance and school learning experience as well as failure to master skill subjects. The difference between a child's performance and level of expectancy becomes more significant as a student advances through his school career. This discrepancy may appear to be insignificant in a child's early school years, therefore, making it more difficult to identify a young student based on the inefficiency in function level.

(b) <u>an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers</u>.

The term "satisfactory interpersonal relationships" refers to the ability to establish and maintain close friendships; the ability to be assertively constructive; and the ability to make appropriate choices for social interaction. In most instances, children who have difficulty building or maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships are readily identified by both peers and teachers.

(c) an inappropriate type(s) of behavior or feeling under normal circumstances (does not include children who are only socially maladjusted).

Behavior is seen as inappropriate when disturbed internal states lead to socially aberrant or self-defeating behavior; that is, behavior which is clearly discordant with that which would normally be expected from other children of similar age under similar circumstances.

(d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

Children who are unhappy or depressed may exhibit a loss of interest or pleasure in all or most all usual activities and pastimes. These behaviors may be expressed verbally or nonverbally, as in frequently sad facial expression, changed peer relations, social isolation, reduced academic achievement, hyperactivity, or restless agitated behavior.

(e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

A child may exhibit physical symptoms such as excessive fatigue, dizziness, nausea, rashes, or an unexplained loss of or alteration in physical functioning; unrealistic fears, such as harm to parents or occurrence of calamities; or pains, such as headaches or stomachaches. Possible physical etiologies should be ruled out prior to attributing the behavior)s) to a psychogenic cause.

Parent Involvement

Public Laws 94-142 and 99-457 have mandated the participation of parents as partners in the education of their child with emotional handicaps. Parents are effective change agents for their children, and share the teacher's responsibility for social, academic, and behavioral development. Through involving parents in their child's education, the parent, child, teacher, school, and community benefit.

This teacher-training guide is based on the premise that parents and families are unique. A systems approach is suggested to assist in the recognition of individual patterns of family adjustment to the diagnosis or placement of a student with emotional handicaps. A model for individualizing parent involvement is provided as a framework for cooperatively and prescriptively incorporating parents into their childrens' programs.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To create an awareness among teachers of students with emotional handicaps on the variables which impact on family adaptation to the diagnosis and placement of a student with emotional handicaps.

2. To describe guidelines for parents and teachers regarding responsibilities related to participation in IEP's.

3. To describe a model for involving parents in the education of their child with emotional handicaps.

4. To describe guidelines for involving parents in the education of their child with emotional handicaps.

5. To describe a continuum of parent-teacher involvement activities.

    a. Teacher-initiated one-way information sharing
    b. Teacher-initiated information sharing
    c. Collaborative support for school programs
    d. Parent involvement in the school community
    e. Parent training
    f. Parent support organizations

6. To describe strategies for working with parents with whom collaborative relationships have been difficult to establish.

Objectives one, three, and six are presented in workshop format. Objectives two and four are accomplished through tip sheets which may be duplicated and distributed to parents and teachers. Objective five is addressed through a series of activity sheets which concisely describe the implementation of activities.

OBJECTIVE ONE

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Objective One: To create an awareness among teachers of students with emotional handicaps of the variables which impact on family adaptation to the diagnosis and placement of a student with emotional handicaps

Rationale

In response to legal mandates and a recognition of the potential of parents as change agents with respect to their child, special educators have increasingly sought parent involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for students with emotional handicaps. In order to work effectively in a collaborative relationship with parents, it is crucial for teachers to be sensitive to the factors that impact on parents' abilities to adapt to the emotional handicapping condition of their child.

Objective of the Workshop

The purpose of this workshop is to develop an awareness of the many diverse factors that influence the family's ongoing ability to adapt to the identification and placement of a child with emotional handicaps.

Content and Learning Activities

Narrative

I. Introduction

As professionals who work with students who have emotional handicaps, we are all aware of the crucial role parents play in the education of their children. In order to establish collaborative relationships, we need to be sensitive to family strengths and needs. Heightening our sensitivity is a goal of this workshop, and to do so we will discuss: stage theory and how it applies to understanding families; the relevance of systems theory, and some practical concerns of the families with whom we work. We will apply this knowledge through several activities. Please feel free to take notes and ask questions. Some handouts will be distributed throughout the discussion for your later reference.

II. Stage theories

A. Stage theory based on Kubler-Ross - these stages represent discrete and identifiable phases which result in a final stage of acceptance (Refer to Figure 1):

1. Initial crisis (e.g. shock, denial, disbelief) may result in feelings of detachment and/or shopping behavior).
2. Emotional disorganization (e.g. guilt, self-blame, disappointment, anger, lowered self-esteem).
3. Adjustment or acceptance (e.g. parents may seek programs for their child, may become advocates, and may become less anxious and more comfortable).

B. Darling's four phase family experience model - these stages represent sequential stages which move towards assimilation:

1. Family discovers their child has a handicap.
2. Family seeks help (first medical, then educational and/or other resources).

3. Family attempts to normalize their existence as a family (perceive themselves and present to others that they are parents first and then parents of an exceptional child).
4. Crusadership mode (a result of the family being unable to establish normal routines, they attempt to achieve normalization by increasing public awareness, challenging systems, promoting legislation).

III. Problems with stage theories as they apply to families of students with emotional handicaps:

A. The research supporting stage theories has not been specific to families of children with emotional handicaps.

B. Relevant research is dated and may not take into account societal and familial changes.

C. Due to the chronic nature of emotional handicaps, parents may not experience the crisis stage when their child is identified by the school/agency/community. When their child is identified as emotionally handicapped, parents may not be surprised.

D. Identification of students with emotional handicaps primarily uses an educational/social model rather than the medical model on which stage theory is based.

E. Parents may not experience all of the stages or experience them in the assumed sequence as presented by stage theory.

F. Stage theory does not appear to allow for differences within or between families.

IV. Ecological/family systems perspective

A. This perspective is based on the assumption that each child is viewed as a complete entity, surrounded by a unique mini-social system or ecosystem (Refer to Figure 2). Point out how each child has a unique "ecosystem."

1. Ask for other examples for each level, i.e. personal characteristics which differ, particularly 1:1 relationships (e.g. child-sibling, child-teacher, etc).
2. Particular membership in small systems differs from child to child over time, particularly interaction between and among systems, and is influenced by cultural values, societal norms, etc.
3. The child is influenced by and influences each system at each level of the ecosystem.

B. Six assumptions of family systems theory:

1. The individual responds to change in the family system.
2. The family system resists change.
3. There is a definite structure to the family.
4. The individual will change more readily if the family changes.
5. Family interactions play a crucial role in maintaining equilibrium in the system.

6. Identified problems and problem individuals can be understood as a part of the family system (e.g. a child identified with multiple emotional problems is the total focus of a single, unemployed mother who lives with her parents and "cannot" work or establish adult relationships due to her child's problems. Her child must remain "sick" in order for her to avoid taking risks and assuming feared adult responsibilities and relationships).

C. The importance of the family system in understanding the child and effecting change is suggested in research that demonstrates more effective therapy with children when parents are also seen in therapy. Research also indicates that positive changes occurred for parents when the child progressed in therapy. Each part of the system affects other parts in a fluid, interdependent way.

D. Systems change over time, as do other particular behaviors, attitudes, coping skills, interactions, etc. of each member (Refer to Figure 3).

Therefore, the family's capacity to adapt its adjustment to the child's handicap at any given point in time is dependent on many combinations of factors, which are unique to that individual family at that time, hence cannot be predicted by using a stage theory.

E. Teachers need to remember that:

1. Changes in the child will affect the family system. As a child's behavior improves, as he/she reaches a new developmental level or faces major change, the family system will be affected and will need to adapt in some way.
2. Correspondingly, as the family system changes, faces new challenges, etc, the child will be affected.
3. As the identified child's behavior improves and he/she becomes more successful at school, the result may be that a sibling's behavior and adjustment may deteriorate.
4. A family system may resist changes in a child identified as emotionally handicapped, which makes communication and collaboration with family members crucial for progress at school (e.g. a middle school child whose mother sympathizes with him and rewards him at home when he is punished in any way at school).

V. Application Activity

A. Divide large group into small groups of three or four members; distribute Case Studies. Instruct participants to read the case studies and take 15 minutes to discuss the attached questions. Appoint a "reporter" who will report the group's responses to the larger group. Use Figure 4 for recording responses.

B. Reconvene: Briefly review with the reporters, responses from each group. Important points to emphasize during this process are:

1. vast differences in resources, etc. between the two families.
2. differences in hypotheses among the small group (may note in real life that parent #2 was much more cautious and reluctant to have child identified as EH than was parent #1).

3. inapplicabilities of stage theory in describing family adaptation to handicapping condition.

VI. Practical Considerations

Up to this point, we have discussed many of the unique factors which influence an individual family system adaptation with respect to their child's emotional handicap. It is time to shift the focus to more practical concerns which are more commonly expressed and/or experienced by parents.

Now, lets spend some time brainstorming what some of these common concerns may be (if no one suggests anything, you might start with the impact of the child's emotional handicap on his/her brothers or sisters). [The presenter should list any audience generated items plus add those from the module which have not been mentioned: changing schools, safety concerns, negative modeling, financial concerns, effects on siblings, and stigma.]

Let's discuss these concerns and some possible teacher strategies to address them. As you go through strategies be sure to ask the participants for additional ideas.

A. Changing schools. - If the classroom placement requires a building change, parents may express some concern or resistance.

Possible strategies:
- Help with the logistics of the move such as transportation, phone numbers, important staff/personnel names, school schedules.
- Accentuate the strengths/advantages of that particular school.
- Where applicable, present the desirability of the "fresh start" aspect of changing buildings, i.e. removing the child from the negative labels, stereotypes, and roles with which he might have been identified in the home school.
- Assist the parent in developing a positive way to present the proposed change to the child.

B. Safety Concerns - Parents may express concerns about their child being placed in a classroom with highly aggressive students.

Possible strategies:
- Explain what methods are used to prevent and handle aggression should it occur in the classroom.
- Invite the parent to observe in the classroom.
- Schedule a follow-up contact with the parent in order to reassure them about safety concerns.
- Solicit suggestions that the parent might present related to safety concerns.

C. Negative modeling - Concerns may be raised by parents about their child learning inappropriate behaviors in the special classrooms.

Possible strategies:
- Emphasize the use of a positive behavior management program which seeks to reward appropriate behavior and reduce inappropriate behavior.
- Point out to parents that you will be utilizing their child's positive behaviors as models for the other students in your class.

- Ask the parent to share any new behaviors which are inappropriate so that they may be targeted at school.

D. Financial concerns - Parents of children with emotional handicaps may have concerns about costs of counseling, transportation costs to counseling, costs of child care to allow parents to participate in school conferences or counseling activities, and medication costs

Possible strategies:
- You should be aware of community resources such as low cost transportation, public agencies which provide financial assistance, sliding scales at the local mental health centers or total waiving of costs.
- Acknowledge with the parents that their financial costs are a legitimate concern.

E. Siblings - Like parents, siblings must also make adjustments and adapt to their brother or sister with an emotional handicap.

These adaptations may take the following forms:
- Not recognizing or associating with handicapped brother/sister at school.
- Not inviting friends into the home.
- Displays of inappropriate behavior with the purpose of gaining their share of parental attention.
- Fears of "catching" the handicap.
- Fears in older siblings about having to assume caretaking roles.
- Older siblings overly protecting the handicapped brother/sister.
- Younger siblings may experience a negative "halo" effect as he or she follows the older handicapped sibling through school grades.

Possible strategies:
- Meet with siblings, his/her teachers and parents to generate ideas on ways to portray the handicapped child's placement in positive terms for the sibling.
- Asking parents to consider how contemplated changes in the handicapped child's program may affect siblings.
- Teachers need to remain aware that the handicapped child is not the only child in the family. The siblings have needs, too, and parents need to reserve time, attention, and resources for their other children.

F. Stigma - Families of children with emotional handicaps experience stigma associated with the "differentness" of their child's behavior and later associated with the identification, labeling, and placement of the child.

This stigma and its results may take the following forms:
- Parents may experience verbal and nonverbal expressions from others of disapproval of their child's behaviors as criticisms of them as parents.
- Parents may withdraw from others, not invite people into the home in order to avoid disapproval.
- Parents may avoid being in public with the child to avoid feeling embarrassed.

- Parents may blame themselves or perceive that other people blame them for their child's emotional problems.
- Pre-existing negative perceptions of special education may exist in the family network.
- After the child is placed in a classroom, the family may have to deal with negative feelings the child has due to teasing by other students, his/her perceptions of being separated from other students, etc.
- Parental concerns about long-term effects of labeling on the child in respect to future educational and job prospects and possible limitations of options in adulthood

Possible Strategies:

- Teachers should recognize that stigma is a legitimate issue with parents and should acknowledge their concerns.
- Teacher can help parents recognize that their child may find more acceptance in a special education room than he/she experiences in regular education programs.
- Teachers can reinforce parents' making a difficult decision to seek help for their child regardless of the possible stigma associated with that decision.
- Teachers should be aware of any local parent support groups or individual parents who can offer support or information.
- Teachers should help parents maintain a positive attitude toward their child and positive views of themselves as parents.

VII. Application activity:

We have discussed the importance of the teacher's understanding of the family system of each student in order to recognize differences in the ways various families adapt to their child's emotional handicap, identification, and placement. We have also looked at some practical concerns that may affect families of emotionally handicapped students. As a final activity, lets return to our case studies and look at how each family may be affected by the practical concerns we have discussed, or by other concerns.

1. Divide into small groups again. Instruct participants to review each case study. Based on presented information, hypothesize which of the practical concerns may be applicable to each family. Discuss ways that a teacher may assist each family to adapt. (Allow 10 minutes in small group.)

VIII. Reconvene. Summarize the workshop: Today we have learned that it is important to view the family as a system in order to understand the child and the individual family's unique capacity to adapt to their child's handicap.

Take a minute to reflect on how the knowledge gained today will be useful to you as you work with each student and his family. (Ask for volunteers to briefly share their insights.)

FIGURE 1

Stage Theory of Parent Adaptation

Kubler-Ross' Model	Darling's Model
1. Initial crisis	1. Discovering the handicap
2. Emotional disorganization	2. Seeking help
3. Adjustment or acceptance	3. Attempting to normalize
	4. Crusadership

Case History #1

Carol is a thirteen-year-old female who demonstrates an above average intelligence quotient on an individualized measure. She has recently been identified as emotionally handicapped and placed in a program at a middle school in a suburban area.

Carol is of average height and slightly below average weight for her age group. Her presenting problems include: depression, apparent lack of social skills, low self-esteem, socially withdrawn, and apparent lack of motivation. Carol seems to have few friends; she avoid contact with others and with those who interact with her. She avoids making eye contact. Carol copes with stress at school by running away.

Carol's mother is a single parent, who has never married. She is a high school graduate, and has been unemployed for ten years. Ms. ____ receives welfare assistance and is alienated from her family. There is no telephone in the home, no car, and public transportation is not readily available. Ms. _____ suffers from mental illness and has received treatment in the past.

Carol has an older half-brother, nineteen-years-old, who recently left school and is in and out of the home. Carol's father has no contact with her or the family. At one time, Carol was placed in a foster home due to her mother's medical problems. Carol lived in this home for two years; and when the family moved out of state, Carol returned to her mother's home. The foster family maintains contact with Carol through letters, Christmas/birthday gifts, and summer visits to their home. Carol's mother is often resistant to the foster family's involvement, and though she allows Carol to accept the gifts, she does not always allow the summer visits.

Case History #2

Karen is a twelve-year-old female who is of average intelligence and achieves passing grades in school. She has recently been identified as emotionally handicapped and placed in an EH classroom in the middle school of a small town.

Karen is tall for her age and overweight. Her presenting problems include aggressive behavior, both physical and verbal. She is shunned by her peers and demonstrates poor social skills. She appears to lack self-esteem. Karen seems to seek attention from her teacher and peers through inappropriate methods, e.g. opens the teacher's desk drawers, intrudes in classmates' projects, such that the initial verbal aggression frequently escalates into physical assault on her classmates.

Karen's mother adopted her after she married Karen's father. Karen lived with her father and adoptive mother for two years before her father died from a terminal illness. Karen's previous family history includes a natural mother who neglected Karen and a step-father who is suspected of having sexually abused her. Karen also had two younger siblings who died of a terminal illness.

Karen's adoptive mother has a college degree, and is employed in a stable, well-paying position. She has grown children who are supportive of her adoptive daughter. Karen and her adoptive mother are close; they are

involved in church activities, and her adoptive mother focuses on helping her daughter become more socially acceptable. Although they are not involved in counseling activities at this time, Karen's adoptive mother has indicated her willingness to do so.

Discussion Questions

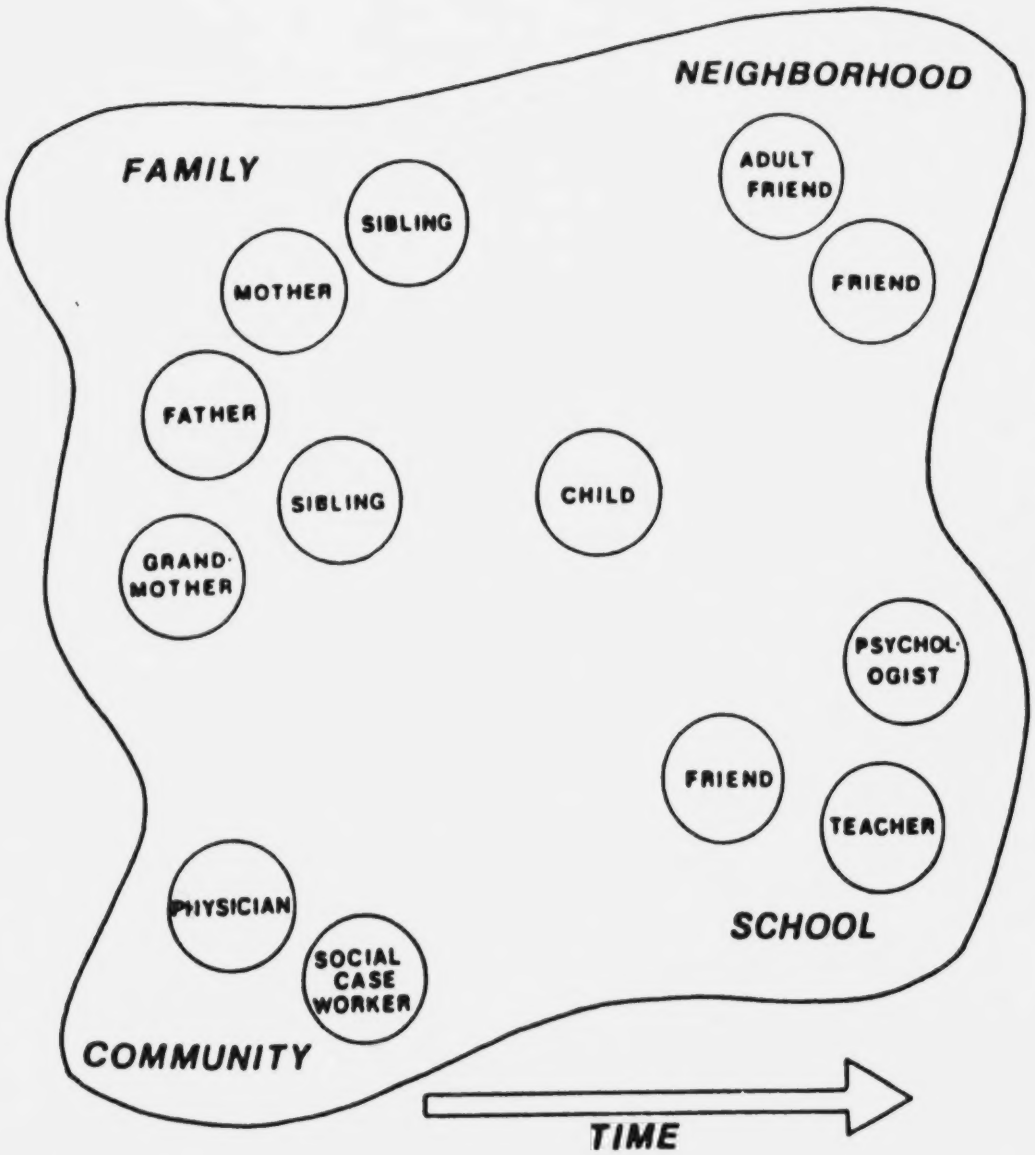
1. Discuss the similarities and differences in these two family systems. Use the attached blank ecosystems to depict applicable systems-resources at each level. Review Figure 2 if necessary.

2. Generate a hypothesis as to how each of these families may adjust and/or adapt to the identification of their child as emotionally handicapped.

3. Hypothesize how effectively each family will be able to seek out and utilize educational and community resources and work cooperatively with their child's school.

4. How applicable is stage theory to understanding each family's capacity to adapt to the emotional handicapping condition of their child. How is family systems theory more applicable to understanding each family's adaptation?

Figure 2



Extended diagram of the ecological system of a child (after Hobbs, 1978, p. 797).

Figure 3

ECOSYSTEM OF A CHILD

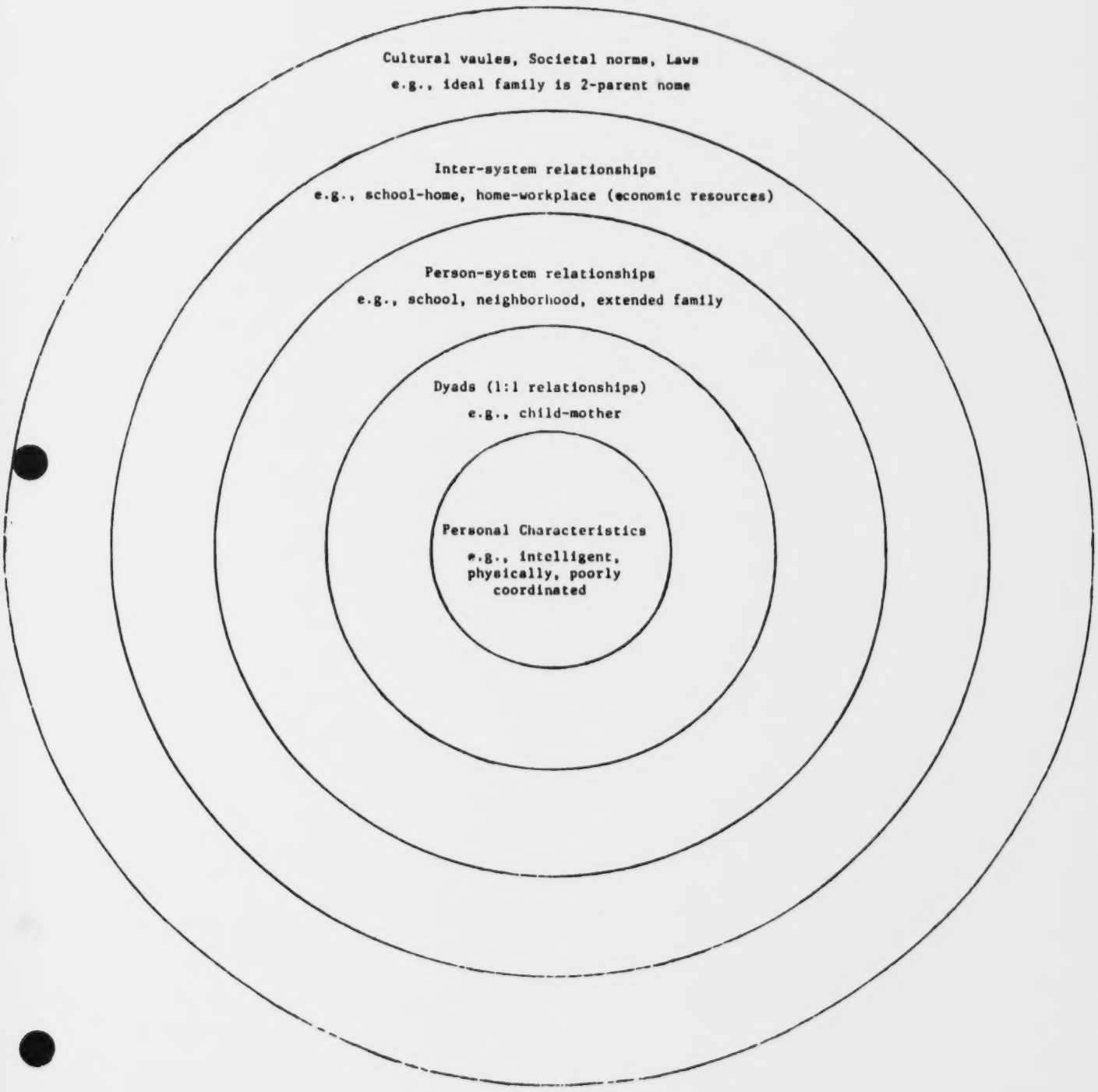
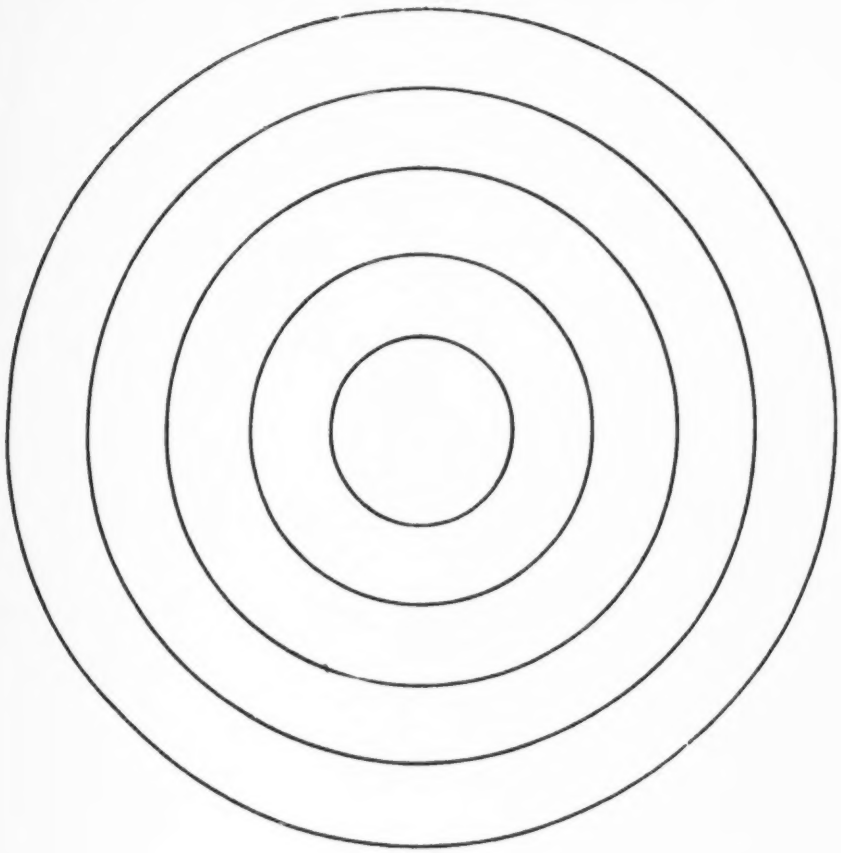
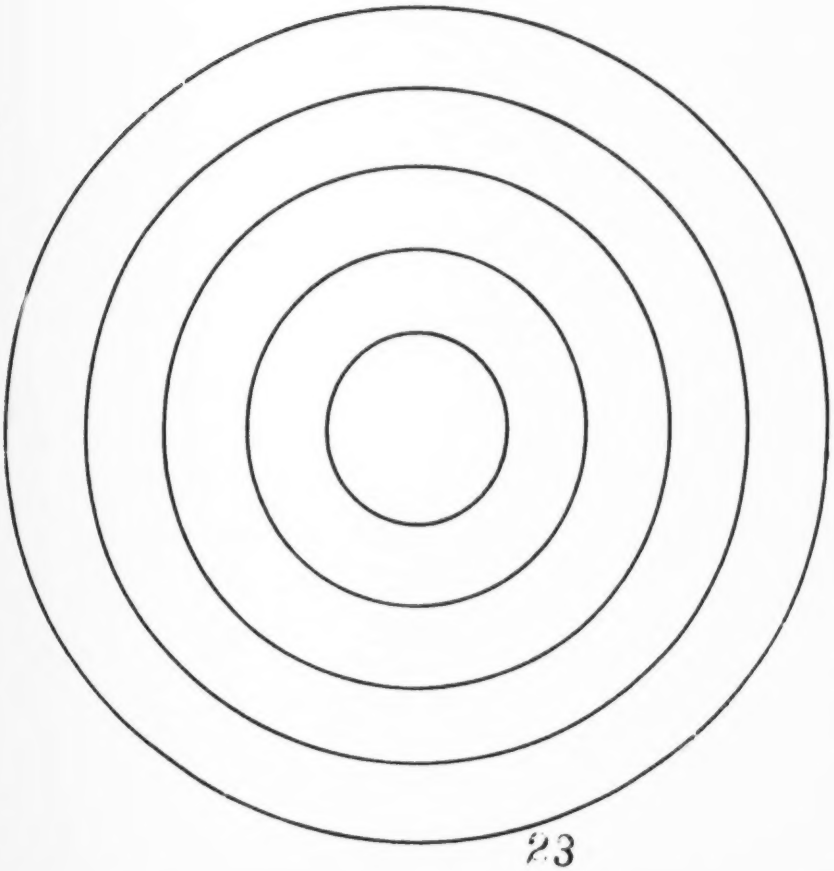


Figure 4

Family #1



Family #2



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OBJECTIVE TWO

Objective Two: To describe the rights and responsibilities of parents and teachers in regard to IEPs.

The following tip sheets target specific rights and responsibilities of parents and teachers in regard to IEPs. The tip sheets assume basic implementation of federal and state guidelines, but target areas which have emerged as problems and concerns among teachers of students with emotional handicaps.

TIPSHEET
Description of the Rights and
Responsibilities of Teachers in the IEP Process

Objective:

To provide teachers with guidelines for effecting meaningful IEP meetings.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... initiate annual review/revisions and IEP's from a positive point of view.
... inform parents of their rights to request an IEP meeting at any time regarding concerns.
... make sure related service personnel are available for conferences.
... document efforts to inform parents.
... consider parents as an active partner in developing, implementing, and maintaining the IEP.
... practice a continuum of interventions designed to recognize and support individual parent needs.

DON'T:

... alter goals and objectives without reconvening an IEP meeting.
... change the amount of related services without an IEP meeting.
... assume parents are not interested with involvement in their child's educational program.
... assume parents are fully cognizant of their rights and responsibilities.

Keys to success:

... Be positive, available, and respectful.
... Provide timely, pertinent, comprehensible information to parents.
... Avoid blaming.
... Accept divergent viewpoints.
... Avoid role conflicts between teachers and parents.
... State performance objectives clearly.
... Recognize and nurture the role in which parents play with ensuring the continuity of behavioral and academic programming in the home.
... Serve as a child and parent advocate.
... Establish and maintain trust.
... Accentuate student and parent strengths as well as needs.

TIPSHEET

Description of the Rights and
Responsibilities of Parents in the IEP Process

Objective:

To provide parents with guidelines for effecting meaningful IEP meetings.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... support school programming.
... maintain a positive, cooperative attitude.
... keep appropriate school personnel advised of conditions related to school performance.
... discover teacher expectations, means of actions, conditions of services provided.
... become educated with regard to additional school and community resources.
... support your child.
... know your school system.
... know your rights and the special education rules and regulations.
... try to solve problems at the most direct and lowest levels possible.
... respond to teacher initiated communication promptly (return telephone calls, respond to letters, notes, permissions, etc.).
... attend conferences.

DON'T:

... be overly dependent on professionals.
... develop unrealistic expectations.
... undermine the school program.
... abdicate parental responsibilities for your child's education.
... deny problems.
... accept circumstances as a condemnation of your parenting skills.
... become involved in avoiding problems.

Keys to success:

... Be conversant concerning your child's educational program.
... Insist on concise, comprehensible IEP language.
... Understand evaluation methods.
... Maintain continual dialogue with teachers.
... Realize and accept your role as teacher and role model.
... Monitor educational progress of your child.
... Approach school conferences as a collaborative problem-solving activity.
... Directly confront problems.
... Ask questions.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Objective Three: to describe a model for involving parents in the education of their child with emotional handicaps.

Workshop

A Process for Parent Involvement

Rationale

Parent involvement is a complex process which involves careful planning. In order to respond to each parent's unique needs, a prescriptive model for parent involvement is presented. Activities are cooperatively developed, implemented, and evaluated as the result of needs assessments. An individual parent program plan, similar to an IEP, is suggested to provide a framework for individualized parent involvement.

Objectives

After completing this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. describe a four phase process for involving parents.
2. identify strategies for assessing parent needs.
3. identify strategies for selecting and planning activities with parents.
4. be aware of various activities for parent involvement.
5. describe ways to evaluate parent involvement.

Workshop narrative:

I. Introduction

A. Review Workshop One emphasizing that parents are unique individuals and, as a result, any program to meet parent needs will have to be prescriptive and parent-based.

B. Parent involvement is an ongoing process, not a one-shot activity; just as students change and grow, parents can change and grow.

C. Use of the four phase model will help in consistently meeting the needs of families even though these specific needs may vary.

D. In addition to providing support for the student and for the parent, the information gleaned through assessment activities of parent needs can be an important tool in developing IEPs.

E. Throughout the process, you are developing a parent planning form, much like an IEP (See Handout #1).

II. A four phase process for involving parents
(USE OVERHEAD #1)

A. Phase 1 -- Intake and Assessment.

During the initial assessment phase, the current interests and needs of parents are determined. In addition, parental knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, and policies can be ascertained.

1. Areas to assessed include:

a. parent's knowledge of their legal rights.
b. advocacy and assertiveness (not aggressiveness) skills.
c. ways in which parents are currently managing behavior.
d. parents general information about behavioral disorders.
e. general information about child development and the variations in development among students with behavioral disorders.
f. general information on parenting skills, family environment, and interaction of family members.

2. Assessment strategies:

a. Parents' needs may be assessed in many of the same ways in which students' needs are assessed.

b. Several basic ways to assess parents needs may be used because of less frequent contact with them:

-- Nonverbal observation of the parent interacting with the student, spouse, and professionals in the school, home or community environment.

-- Interact with parents on an informal level; home visits, school visitations, telephone calls, community activities, and school activities.

-- Conferences may also be used to assess parent needs. Needs can be assessed through formal parent/teacher conferences, informal discussions, and group conferences regarding school issues.

-- Interviews are valuable ways of gathering information and ascertaining parent attitude. These can be conducted in a variety of places, and can be structured or unstructured.

-- Brainstorming with several parents may be helpful in developing a sense of group needs.

-- Formal questionnaires are perhaps the most commonly used assessment tools, though they may inhibit the kinds of responses which parents might generate.

-- In developing a needs assessment document the following steps are suggested:

- o list issues that represent stated parental interests and needs.
- o provide that list of issues to a sample group of parents for review.
- o construct a needs assessment document.
- o disseminate the needs assessment document for parental input.
- o analyze collected data.
- o develop plan.

d. Review Sample Needs Assessment

-- Parent knowledge and interests -- Handouts 2, 3, and 4
-- Parent perceptions -- Handout 5
-- Parent attitudes -- Handout 6

B. Phase 2 -- Selection of goals and objectives.

It is important that the selection of activities are relevant to the individual needs identified through the assessment phase.

Break workshop participants into small groups. Ask them to generate at least five things to consider in selecting activities for parents. Examples:

-- educational level of parents
-- parent experience with children
-- degree to which parents want and need to participate
-- socioeconomic level of parents
-- parents' emotions and attitudes
-- parents' success in previous dealings with the school
-- parents' available time and resources
-- outcome objectives

Regroup and discuss, generating the five most important activities. Use of the parent involvement plan (Handout 1 may be helpful).

C. Phase 3 -- Selection and implementation of activities. (Refer to materials from Objective Five of this module.)

1. Initiate activities in a sequential way according to parent progress. Be sensitive to emerging issues.
2. Consider all variables affection parental participation, including time, site, and length of activity.
3. Provide comprehensive, concise information regarding the purpose, location, date, and time of each activity.

D. Phase 4 -- Evaluation of activities.

1. Evaluation should be from the perspective of both the parent and teacher.
2. Parent evaluation should include their personal reaction to the relevance of the activity and their interest in participating in additional activities.
3. Teacher evaluation should be conducted through observations of the activities, parent questionnaires, end-of-activity interviews, and an analysis of the need for additional parent involvement activities.

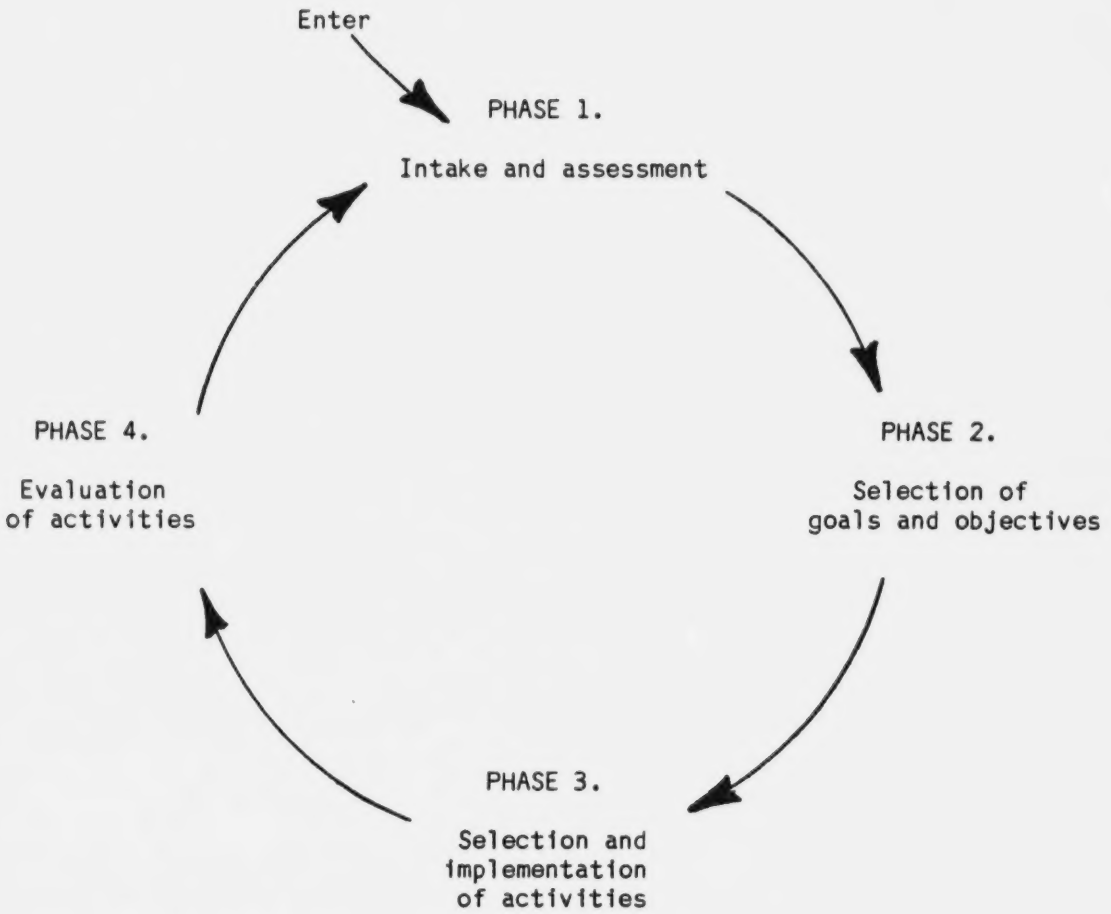
Application Activity

To review the materials in Objective 5 of this module which describes parent involvement activities, break into small groups. Ask each group member to find one activity which they have used in the past and to describe it to the group:

1. how they felt about the activity.
2. what was the response to the activity.
3. how would they change the activity.

Overhead #1

PARENT INVOLVEMENT



The Individual Parent Involvement Plan (IPIP)

Parent involvement: The developmental capital of special education
Bauer, A.M. and Shea, T.M. (1985)

gram Development Form

Parents' Names _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

I	II	III	IV
Assessment	Goals and Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
A. List the assessment techniques used to obtain the data synthesized in IB.	A. List the goals, by priority, derived from the assessment process and mutually agreed on by parents and teacher.	List the activities designed by parents and teacher to meet the objectives in IIB.	A. Process: List the procedures parents and teacher will use to evaluate the processes for carrying out the activities in III.
B. List the needs mutually agreed upon using the assessment techniques in IA.	B. List the objectives derived from the goals in IIA.		B. Content: List the procedures parents and teachers will use to evaluate the content of the activities in III.

Parents and teachers of exceptional children: A handbook of involvement. Shea, T. M. & Bauer, A. M. (1985). p. 336.

Parental Knowledge About PL 94-142

What Does Public Law 94-142 Mean for My Child?

Directions: Respond to each item by circling "yes" or "no."

1. Special education means the total school program for my handicapped child. yes no
2. Special education is to be available for every handicapped child of school-age. yes no
3. If my child is in kindergarten and needs special education, we will need to pay for this. yes no
4. If my child is handicapped he/she will automatically be considered for a special class or school. yes no
5. Each child who will receive special education services must have a written Individualized Education Program. yes no
6. My child's Individualized Education Program is planned by his/her teacher. yes no
7. The school must invite me to come to all of the committee meetings where they discuss my child's program. yes no
8. When I go to a committee meeting, I can listen and offer ideas even though I am not a member of the committee. yes no
9. The school must have my consent before they can evaluate or place my child in a special program. yes no
10. If I disagree with the school about my child's program, I will need a lawyer to straighten it out. yes no
11. Federal money pays for special education, and all my school needs to do is apply for it. yes no

Parents and professionals in special education. Schultz, J. (1987). p.227.

Parental Knowledge About PL 94-142

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9. The school must have my consent before they can evaluate or place my child in a special program. yes no
10. If I disagree with the school about my child's program, I will need a lawyer to straighten it out. yes no
11. Federal money pays for special education, and all my school needs to do is apply for it. yes no

Parents and professionals in special education. Schultz, J. (1987). p.227.

Program Development Form

Parents' Names _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

I	II	III	IV
Assessment	Goals and Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
A. List the assessment techniques used to obtain the data synthesized in IB.	A. List the goals, by priority, derived from the assessment process and mutually agreed on by parents and teacher.	List the activities designed by parents and teacher to meet the objectives in IIB.	A. Process: List the procedures parents and teacher will use to evaluate the processes for carrying out the activities in III.
B. List the needs mutually agreed upon using the assessment techniques in IA.	B. List the objectives derived from the goals in IIA.		B. Content: List the procedures parents and teachers will use to evaluate the content of the activities in III.

Parents and teachers of exceptional children: A handbook of involvement.
Shea, T. M. & Bauer, A. M. (1985). p. 336.

Handout #3

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING YOUR CHILD'S INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

This checklist is designed to help you evaluate your child's individualized education program (IEP). You may request a copy of the IEP and take it home to review using this checklist. The checklist should help you and the school staff decide if the individualized education program develops and appropriate education for your child. Be sure to count your contributions in the checklist. You are a member of the team too!

	Please circle	
1. **Evaluation Results** -- The evaluation was appropriate and the information we obtained was useful for planning and educational program for my child.	Yes	No
The evaluation information included:		
standardized tests:_____	Yes	No
other tests:_____		
_____	Yes	No
observation of the child.	Yes	No
2. **The IEP Conference** -- The IEP meeting was held within thirty days following receipt of the letter informing me of the evaluation results.	Yes	No
The IEP conference included all required participants.	Yes	No
Educators presented information during the IEP meeting in understandable language.	Yes	No
I was given the opportunity to ask questions about points I didn't understand regarding the IEP.	Yes	No
I was encouraged to contribute significant information to my child's IEP.	Yes	No
Educations provided information that helped me understand the IEP process.	Yes	No
I felt like a full participating member with the educators during the development of the IEP.	Yes	No
I was given specific information on how to appeal the program assignment decisions in the IEP.	Yes	No
3. **A Review of the IEP** -- The IEP contained the following items:		
annual goals	Yes	No
short-term objectives	Yes	No
specific service(s) to be performed	Yes	No
present level of performance	Yes	No
dates services were to begin	Yes	No
ways to check my child's progress	Yes	No

Partners. Lillie, D. & Place, P.A. (1982). pp. 91-93

percentage of time my child will spend in regular class placement — Yes / No

4. **Annual Goals** -- The annual goals in the IEP seemed to fully meet the educational needs of my child. — Yes / No

   I understood all the annual goals. — Yes / No

5. **Short-term Objectives** -- The short-term objectives are written as skills my child will acquire in the next year. — Yes / No

6. **Specific Services** -- The IEP clearly states what services(s) my child will receive this school year. — Yes / No

   The services for my child in the IEP were determined by what he or she <u>needed</u>, not by what was available. — Yes / No

   I understand and am satisfied with the services to be provided. — Yes / No

7. **Present Level of Performance** -- The description of my child's present level of performance includes information on these areas:

   - self-help skills (personal maintenance) — Yes / No
   - academic skills (reading, math, etc.) — Yes / No
   - social behaviors (how he/she gets along with others, etc.) — Yes / No
   - physical skills (coordination, running, etc.) — Yes / No
   - vocational or prevocational skills — Yes / No

8. **Dates of Service** -- The dates for the beginning of services were clear. — Yes / No

   I know when the current IEP services will end for my child. — Yes / No

9. **Evaluation of Progress** -- The method of checking my child's progress included:

   - how it would be checked — Yes / No
   - when it would be checked — Yes / No
   - who would be responsible for making sure these are done — Yes / No

10. **Time in Regular Class** -- Some regular class placements were considered during the IEP meeting. — Yes / No

    The percentage of time my child will spend in regular class is _____ percent.

    I am satisfied that every attempt was made to provide services for as much time as possible in the regular classroom. — Yes / No

    I believe that the IEP that we developed best fits my child's educational needs. — Yes / No

PARENT QUIZ

The following statements are designed to find out how much you know about the education of children with special needs. Read each sentence and then indicate whether you think it is true or false. When you are finished, check your answers against the answer key that follows. This will give you an indication of the extent of your current understanding and knowledge about the education of children with special needs and the laws that are provided to assure all children an appropriate education.

1. Federal law now requires that all children with special needs must be educated in regular classrooms. True False
2. An individual assigned as a surrogate parent to a special needs child has all the rights and privileges of a real parent of the child with regard to that child's education. True False
3. Parents have the right to read all pertinent educational records of their child and request changes in information that they feel is incorrect. True False
4. *Exceptional children* is a phrase used to refer to a number of different types of children with special needs, including health impaired children, visually impaired children, mentally handicapped children, and learning disabled children, among others. True False
5. IEP stands for the Instructional and Educational Placement of a child. True False
6. As a result of student-screening activities, the school system is able to determine what type of educational program is best suited for your child. True False
7. A school system is obligated to involve you, the parent, in decisions concerning special educational services for your child with special needs. True False
8. *Least restrictive environment* is a phrase meaning that each child must have enough room to move around in. True False
9. A *due process hearing* is a meeting with an impartial hearing officer intended to settle any disputes between parents and schools. True False
10. Your school system should involve you in setting the annual goals for your special needs child. True False
11. Some school system staff believe that parents of children with special needs should not be involved in educational decision making. True False

Partners. Lillie, D. & Place, P. A. (1982). pp. xi, xii.

12. The first step in handling a problem that you have with the school system is to talk it over with your child's teacher. True False

13. *Nondiscriminatory testing* refers to federal requirements that a child cannot be tested solely because of his or her race. True False

14. A school system is required to provide an interpretive conference with you after any special evaluation undertaken with your child. True False

15. The parents of a special needs child must have a chance to review recommendations for a special placement before that placement is made. True False

16. Your child's teacher should be able to tell you at any time during the year what the current educational goals for your child are, and to what extent those goals have been met to date. True False

17. The school system must have your written consent before it can do any special testing of your child. True False

18. A regular classroom that provides special individualized instruction is the least restrictive alternative available for a special needs child. True False

19. Special day schools or full-time placement in a self-contained special class are approaches to educating special needs children that are outdated and now illegal. True False

20. Parents of special needs children should keep an information notebook concerning their child's special needs and educational program. True False

HOW DID YOU DO?

Following are the most appropriate answers to the *Parent Quiz:*

1. False	6. False	11. True	16. True
2. True	7. True	12. True	17. True
3. True	8. False	13. False	18. True
4. True	9. True	14. True	19. False
5. False	10. True	15. True	20. True

HANDOUT #5

Open-Ended Questionnaire

1. The best family time for my child is when we _____.
2. I will never forget the time that my child and I _____.
3. When I take my child to the store, I am concerned that he/she will _____.
4. Other people wonder about how my child will _____.
5. I wish people knew the good times my child and I have when we _____.
6. I would be embarrassed if people knew how difficult it was to _____ with my child.
7. People thing my child is unable to _____. They would be surprised to know that _____.
8. I'm worrying about making a decision about my child's _____.
9. Sometimes I think my child will never _____.
10. My child is especially difficult around the house when he/she _____.
11. My husband (or wife) gets especially upset when our child _____.
12. I give my child a hug when he/she _____.
13. It is especially difficult around the house when my child _____.
14. My child wants _____ and sometimes I just don't have the energy.
15. It is sometimes difficult for our other children to _____ for the child with special needs.
16. The hard thing about having a special child is _____.
17. I am so glad that my child likes to _____.
18. I wish I knew more about _____.

Source: Heward, W. L., Darddig, J.C., & Rossett, A. Working with parents of handicapped children. Columbus, OH.: Charles E. Merrill, pg. 240.

Schulz, Jane B., Parents and professionals in special education. , pg . 253.

Below you will find a school attitude quiz. Think carefully about your interactions with your school system's staff and answer each question. How your school system measures up on the attitude scale will give you a good indication as to how you may need to interact with the school system on behalf of your child.

SCHOOL ATTITUDE QUIZ

1. I feel welcome when I visit school.	Yes	No
2. I feel that suggestions that I make regarding my child's program will be acted upon.	Yes	No
3. The school has helped me find community services for my child.	Yes	No
4. I met my child's new teacher within the first few weeks of school.	Yes	No
5. When I ask, the teacher gives me advice on how to deal with special problems.	Yes	No
6. My child is provided services and activities that are provided to other students in the school system, when appropriate.	Yes	No
7. The school has explained to me my child's legal rights with respect to education.	Yes	No
8. I have been invited to conferences concerning my child, and have been given sufficient advance notice of them. An effort was made to have the meeting at a *mutually* convenient time and location.	Yes	No
9. We have discussed how much time my child will spend in special learning situations.	Yes	No
10. I feel good about my child's present educational program and the school staff.	Yes	No

References

Bauer, A.M. & Shea, T.M. (1985). Parent involvement: The developmental capital of special. Techniques: A journal for remedial education and counseling, 1, January, 1985.

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Schultz, J. (1987). Parents and professionals in special education. Boston. Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Shea, T.M. & Bauer, A.M. (1985). Parents and teachers of exceptional children: A handbook of involvement. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

OBJECTIVE FOUR

Objective Four: To describe guidelines for involving parents in the education of their child with emotional handicaps.

Parents and teachers are people. And, as in any situation in which people interact, mere factual knowledge of the processes may not be enough to assure success.

The following tipsheets go beyond the factual knowledge presented in the workshops and activities of this module. These tipsheets provide insight into the subtle nuances of home-school interaction. They present some basic suggestions in order to make interactions among parents, teachers, and students more successful.

TIPSHEET

Sensitivity to the Needs of Families

Objective:

To be responsive to the unique, individual needs of families.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... be aware of cultural, language, and social variables which make each family unique.
... Become aware of family structure (single versus two-parent families, extended families).
... acknowledge differences among families in financial and person resources.
... recognize that parents have unique skills.
... be positive; nobody wants to hear bad things all the time.
... recognize that demands other than their child's education do occupy parents' time.

DON'T:

... use jargon.
... start out with negative comments.
... be dogmatic or assume adversarial relationships.
... make requests of parents without being assured that they have the resources to complete the requests.
... say "I know how you feel." You can't.
... dress up or dress down; dress in a way in which both you and the family are comfortable.
... criticize or berate parents for not doing enough.

Be sure to remember:

... each family is unique.
... to empathize rather than sympathize.
... to emphasize the partnership between home and school.
... parents perceive you as the expert; be able to present your rationale for instructional and behavioral decisions.
... as students become more capable of managing their behavior at school, they may become more testing at home.
... to work together to develop activities and assignment for parents to do at home.
... parents play a major role, actively or passively, in the education of their children.

Keys to success:

... Demonstrate that your are a capable professional who is able to provide resources and assistance.
... Know your professional limits and communicate them to the parents.
... Ensure that suggestions are beneficial for the family rather than simply beneficial for the teacher-student interaction.
... Communicate your desire to work cooperatively with parents and their child.

TIPSHEET

Helping Parents Become Problem Solvers

Objective:

To assist parents to become active, independent problem solvers.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... assist parents in identifying problems early, before they become unmanageable.
... model problem solving strategies and systematically withdraw your support.
... help parents set reasonable goals and evaluate their own strategies to meet those goals.

DON'T:

... present finished solutions.
... expect parents to function independently at the beginning of your relationship.
... give advice about personal and interpersonal problems of family members.

Be sure to remember:

... to include parents' ideas; be a listener and help parents generate their own solutions.
... parents know their children.
... parents are partners, not clients or students.
... parents need assistance in seeking out and using resources.

Keys to success:

... Demonstrate that you respect parents and their attempts at solving their own problems
... Follow-through with the problem solving process.
... Reinforce any steps that parents take towards applying problem solving strategies.
... Communicate to parents that the school is not their only resource.
... Know your resources. Help parents deal with the bureaucracy and red tape involved in using resources.

TIPSHEET

Developing True Collaboration

Objective:

To use parents as equal participants and collaborators in the education of their children.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... build rapport from the first meeting with the parent.
... focus on collaborative methods to help the child learn.
... actively and cooperatively explore parent and teacher concerns and goals for the student.
... involve the student when appropriate.
... listen.
... delineate responsibilities in any solutions.
... work together.

DON'T:

... monopolize the conversation.
... make unreasonable demands.

Be sure to remember:

... parents are experts about their own children.
... parents are not to blame for their children's problems or lack of success.

Keys to success:

... Keep communication open.
... Make yourself as available as possible.
... Approach problems as home-school-student concerns; all three areas must be involved to solve problems.

TIPSHEET

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Objective:

To be able to successfully share information with parents through parent-teacher conferences.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... communicate the reason for the conference when making the appointment with the parents.
... keep the conference participants to the number necessary; overpopulating conferences can be intimidating.
... consider the setting; get out from behind the desk.
... use adult size furniture.

DON'T:

... create barriers between participants through using furniture.
... split parents; allow them to select their places first so that they may sit together.

Be sure to remember:

... to discuss responsibility, rather than blame.
... the conference should address both parental and teacher concerns.
... to initiate the discussion in a positive mode.
... to summarize the conference as you complete the discussion. Ask the parents to repeat any points which you feel are complex.
... conferences are only a part of ongoing communication.

Keys to success:

... An initial individual conference with only teacher and parents may be a way to establish credibility and rapport.
... Conferences may need to be at places and times which are more convenient than at the school during the school day.
... Open conferences with ice breakers and small talk.

TIPSHEET

IEP Participation

Objective:

To involve parents as equal partners in their children's IEP's.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO:

... treat IEP's as planning conferences.
... describe "present levels of performance" in a positive way.
... present documentation and work samples to demonstrate student's successes.
... consider parents' goals for their students.
... explain to parents their rights and responsibilities about IEPs.
... avoid jargon. Goals and objectives should be clearly written.

DON'T:

... make recommendations about services if you are not sure about their availability or quality.
... present IEPs as a finished product.

Be sure to remember:

... students may have a great deal of positive input into their educational programs.
... IEP conferences are planning conferences, and parents' input is equally important in planning goals and objectives.
... to assure parents that IEPs are not written in stone; goals and objectives may be amended.
... to review a student's IEP only on an annual basis may be limiting; IEPs may be reviewed at the request of the parent or teacher.
... parents are active participants in the IEP development.
... when appropriate, students should be involved in developing their IEPs.
... to have other personnel available if necessary.
... to let parents know in advance who will be at the conference and that they have the right to bring someone or request someone to attend.
... parents need specifics, not generalities, if change is desired.

Keys to success:

... Meeting with parents briefly before other participants arrive may put them at ease.
... Stimulate parents in thinking long term about their children.
... Involve students and parents in projecting long term goals and how the IEP can be developed to accomplish that goal.

OBJECTIVE FIVE

Objective Five: To describe several parent-teacher involvement activities.

The following activity sheets represent parent-teacher involvement activities which can be conducted by teachers. These activities are grouped as:

1. Teacher-initiated one-way information sharing
2. Teacher-initiated information sharing
3. Collaborative support for school programs
4. Parent involvement in the school community
5. Parent training
6. Parent support organization

Activities for Parent Involvement

The following activities are designed to create a positive working atmosphere between parents and teachers. Though we recognize the importance of involving parents, we also recognize that teachers are busy people. The following suggestions may help you in implementing the activities:

1. Prepared mailing labels may be available to you through the personnel or administrative office of your corporation.

2. Preparing a telephone directory for your classroom saves time in looking up numbers.

3. Keeping a phone log (a model is presented on the following page) provides for easy documentation of contacts.

4. Anecdotal records assist in tracking which important notes and notices have been sent to parents. These records can be kept in your classroom student files.

5. Photocopy all notes for later reference and documentation.

PHONE LOG

Principal/Teacher:_____ Date:_____

Student's name:_____ Time:_____

Person contacted:_____

Purpose of call:_____

_____

_____

_____

Response:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #1

Activity:

"Welcome Back to School" letter

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To welcome and orient parents at the beginning of the school year.

Description:

Written communication to parents to convey information about basic school procedures

Implementation:

1. List important information to be shared with parents.
2. Include name and telephone numbers for easy communication. Titles should be used (Ms., Mr.).
3. Letter should be mailed a week before school or given to students the first day of school.

Evaluation:

Parental response or feedback.

Helpful hints:

Avoid educational jargon.
Be warm and friendly.
Keep it brief.

SAMPLE LETTER
School Opening

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 19_____ - 19_____ school year! I hope you have had an enjoyable summer. We are looking forward to a very exciting and interesting year. Many activities and learning experiences have been planned and we are ready to get started with your child's education program.

To help us work with your child, you need to know our classroom rules. They are as follows: (clear and concise list)

The classroom supplies needed by your child are: (list)

If at any time you have a question or concern, feel free to call met at _____. If I am unable to come to the telephone, please leave a message and I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Again, WELCOME!

Sincerely,

_____
Teacher's Signature

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #2

Activity:

Initial parent telephone contact

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To open communication between parent and teacher.
To establish rapport.

Description:

Teacher telephones parent at the beginning of the school year to familiarize parent with the teacher and school. Teacher may also gain information about the home situation.

Implementation:

1. Determine an uninterrupted period of time to make call.
2. Make a checklist of items to be discussed (teacher's name, correct spelling, name of school, school telephone number, welcoming remarks, etc.).

Variation:

1. Discuss student handbook summary sheet or any other information from the school.

Evaluation:

Conversation with parent.

Helpful hints:

1. Call at convenient times of day.
2. Be brief and to the point.
3. Remember to document the conversation.
4. Make the telephone call no later than the first day of school.
5. Be positive.
6. Be specific when asking questions about students (i.e. is there anything I need to know about medication? allergies? personal situation?)

Date Entered

Student's Name:

Anecdotal Record - Conferences - Home Visitation - Parent Conference
Information Secured - Advice Given - Plan for Correction

COMMENTS (Teacher or Other Personnel Sign Each Entry)

Date		Teacher

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #3

Activity:

Monthly calendars

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To make parents and students aware of daily classroom activities and upcoming school events.

Description:

A calendar for the month on which activities are written is sent home with the students.

Implementation:

1. List activities for the upcoming month.
    a. Deadlines for projects and forms.
    b. School activities.
    c. Speakers and guests.
    d. Classroom events.
2. Note activities which require permission slips.
3. Include students in designing calendar when appropriate.
4. Send home with students.
5. Provide copies to the principal and director.

Evaluation:

Feedback from students and parents.

Helpful hints:

1. Maintain student confidentiality.
2. Use one sheet - clear, concise, uncluttered.
3. Include behavior modification tips as a space filler.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

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Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #4

Activity:

Newsletters

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To inform parents of classroom and school activities.

Description:

Information in a newspaper format is sent home with the student.

Implementation:

1. List important upcoming events for the classroom and building.
2. Write a brief report of any classroom "happenings" or activities.
3. Include any classroom reminders.
4. Involve students (perhaps through a contest) in naming newsletter.
5. Make sure it is attractive, and appears to be "fun to read".
6. Include students in an active role (writing feature articles, editing, selecting title, etc.).

Evaluation:

Parental comments or response to information presented.
Assess student involvement.

Helpful hints:

Be aware of confidentiality and student privacy when writing articles.
Make sure to establish consistency in publishing (weekly, monthly, etc.)

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #5

Activity:

Student-of-the-Day notes

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To provide immediate information and reinforcement to parents of their child's appropriate behavior or performance.

Description:

Note is sent home regarding the student-of-the-day for behavior, academic performance, helping around the building, etc.

Implementation:

1. Develop criteria for student-of-the-day.
2. Observe students throughout the school day.
3. During last five minutes of the school day, determine who meets the criteria of student of the day.
4. Give award to student.

Evaluation:

Feedback from students and parents.

Helpful hints:

1. Be consistent in applying criteria.
2. Make students aware of the guidelines.
3. Consider involvement of the students in selecting the student.
4. Track number of times each student is selected for cumulative award.

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #6

Activity:

Daily or weekly reports

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels

Elementary | Middle/Junior High | Secondary

Objective:

To increase awareness of day-by-day progress of students.

Description:

Daily and/or weekly documentation of student's behavior and progress is sent to parent.

Implementation:

1. Evaluate individual goals for each student.
2. Modify formats to meet class and student needs (see samples).
3. State behavioral objectives in a positive manner.
4. Follow schedule (daily or weekly) for sending notes home.
5. Review contents of note with student.

Variation:

1. Include parent response sheet.
2. Reinforce for daily return of report. Signature may be required as part of the evaluation criterion.
3. Adapt sample check list provided to evaluate hourly/daily performance.

Evaluation:

Feedback from parents and students.

Helpful hints:

1. Keep a copy to determine patterns of behavior.
2. Call parents at the end of the day if behavior was unacceptable and needs to be dealt with more personally.

BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

													Bus points				TOTAL
CLASS RULES	1. Do your work.																
	2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.																
	3. Stay in assigned area.																
	4. Speak appropriately with permission.																
	5. Take care of equipment.																
INDIVIDUAL GOALS	6.																
	7.																
	8.																
	9.																
	10.																
	TOTAL																

STUDENT: _____ **DATE:** _____

Dear Parents,

Your child has achieved _____% of his/her daily goals.

The resource room assignment for today is: _____.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

_____
Teacher's Signature

_____
Parent Signature

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

STUDENT: _____ **DATE:** _____

Dear Parents,

Your child has achieved _____% of his/her daily goals.

The resource room assignment for today is: _____.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

_____
Teacher's Signature

_____
Parent Signature

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

DAILY PROGRESS REPORT FORM

STUDENT: _____ **TEACHER:** _____ **WEEK BEGINNING:** _____

1. Child takes chart home daily.
2. Parent signs chart daily.
3. Child returns chart to school daily.

A check indicates satisfactory performance:
A zero indicates unsatisfactory performance: 0
NA indicates that the item does not apply today: NA

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
1. Homework turned in					
2. Follows directions					
3. Gets right down to work					
4. Pays attention to teacher					
5. Tries hard to do assignments (effort)					
6. Respects the rights of others					
7. Follows class and school rules					
8. Talks at proper time					
9. Acceptable behavior in special classes					
10. OTHER:					
Teacher's Initials:					

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

PARENT'S COMMENTS: _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE _____

DAILY PROGRESS REPORT FORM

STUDENT: _____ TEACHER: _____ WEEK BEGINNING: _____

1. Child takes chart home daily.
2. Parent signs chart daily.
3. Child returns chart to school daily.

A check indicates satisfactory performance:
A zero indicates unsatisfactory performance: 0
NA indicates that the item does not apply today: NA

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10. OTHER:					
Teacher's Initials:					

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:	PARENT'S COMMENTS:	PARENT'S SIGNATURE
Monday:		
Tuesday:		
Wednesday:		
Thursday:		
Friday:		

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Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #7

Activity:

Notices from teacher to parent

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To promote communication between teacher and parents.

Description:

Brief announcement sent home with student.

Implementation:

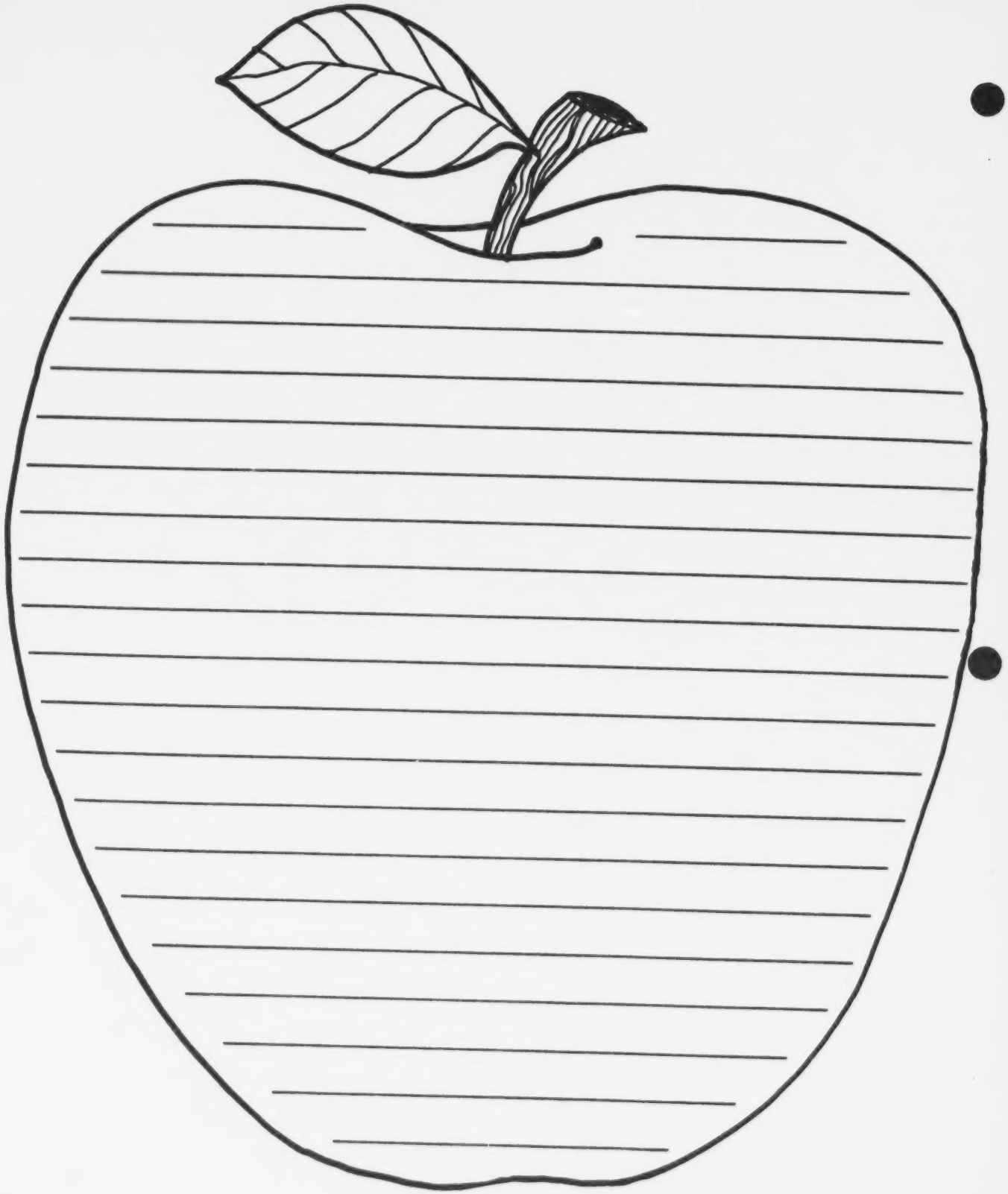
1. Determine if occasion is appropriate for notice.
2. Retain a copy for personal file.

Evaluation:

Feedback from student and/or parent.

Helpful hints:

1. Make sure notice is positive.
2. Choose age-appropriate design.



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NOTICE OF IMPROVEMENT

Room_____

Date_____

Dear Parents:

I am happy to report that _____ has shown im-
Child's Name

provement in _____.

Please congratulate him/her on this progress and encourage good work habits and attitudes for continued success.

_____
Teacher

NOTICE OF IMPROVEMENT

Room_____

Date_____

Dear Parents:

I am happy to report that _____ has shown im-
Child's Name

provement in _____.

Please congratulate him/her on this progress and encourage good work habits and attitudes for continued success.

_____
Teacher

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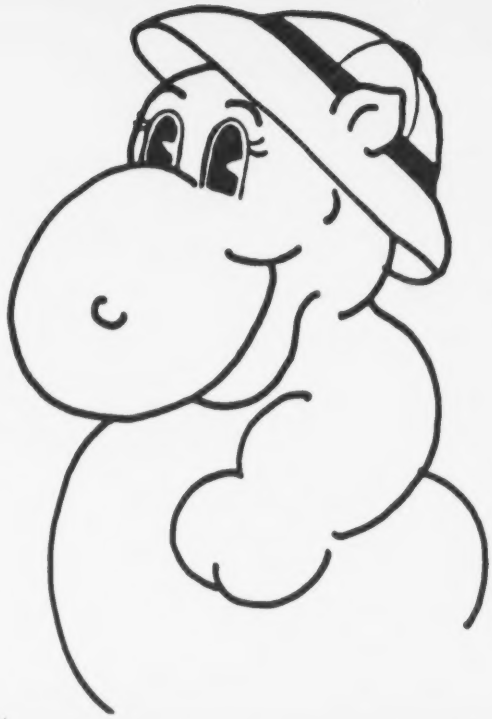
I can



This is to certify that

_____

can _____

_____ / /

Signature Date

I know

This is to certify that

_____

knows _____

_____ / /

Signature Date

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Multiplication Award

This is to certify that _____

knows the ____ MULTIPLICATION tables and has passed a _____ minute time test.

_____ / /

Signature Date

Addition Award

This is to certify that _____

knows the _____ ADDITION tables and has passed a _____ minute time test.

_____ / /

Signature Date

Subtraction Award

This is to certify that _____

knows the _____ SUBTRACTION tables and has passed a _____ minute time test.

_____ / /

Signature Date

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GOOD NEWS ABOUT _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ / /

Signature Date

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Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #8

Activity:

Communication with parents concerning homework

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To inform parents of student's daily assignments.
To inform parents of student's progress in returning completed assignment.

Description:

Student is provided with a daily assignment sheet. Sheet is sent home daily to assist parent and student in completing homework. Resource room teacher documents completion of homework and mails/sends documentation to parents.

Implementation:

1. Student is given assignment sheet.
2. Student completes sheet; sheet is monitored and initialed by regular education or resource teacher.
3. Student refers to sheet when completing assignment.
4. Teacher evaluates student's progress in returning assignments (see form).
5. Teacher may copy and send assignment sheet home to parents when completed.

Evaluation:

Student accuracy in completing assignment sheet.
Feedback from parents.
Feedback from regular education teacher.

Helpful hints:

1. Inform parents that the assignment sheet is being used.
2. Explain assignment sheet to parents.
3. Follow up with telephone call if student is inconsistent with returning sheet.
4. Modify form to meet individual student needs.

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

	Teacher's Initials:
MATH: _____	_____
ENGLISH: _____	_____
SOCIAL STUDIES: _____	_____
SCIENCE: _____	_____
HEALTH: _____	_____
ARTS: _____	_____

TEACHER COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

	Teacher's Initials:
MATH: _____	_____
ENGLISH: _____	_____
SOCIAL STUDIES: _____	_____
SCIENCE: _____	_____
HEALTH: _____	_____
ARTS: _____	_____

TEACHER COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

ASSIGNMENT RECORD SHEET

Name _____

Date	Assignment	Completed	Incomplete	Not returned	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #9

Activity:

Regular communication between teachers and parents

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Any mainstreamed student.

Objective:

To facilitate communication between teachers and parents

Description:

Periodic feedback concerning students' academic and behavioral performances within the regular education program.

Implementation:

1. Adapt sample communication form for your classroom.
2. Distribute form to regular education teachers.
3. Regular education teacher checks appropriate responses and returns to resource teacher.
4. Mail/send communication forms to parents.

Evaluation:

1. Feedback from regular education teacher.
2. Feedback from parents.

Helpful hints:

1. Retain a copy of the forms for possible discussion at IEP and parent conferences.
2. Mail reports to the home to prevent student "loss" of forms.
3. Review with regular education teachers the need to be cautious in the types of comments made.
4. Impress upon the regular education teacher the need for immediate return of the form to be sent home.

RESOURCE TEACHER: _____ DATE: _____

REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHER: _____

STUDENT: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
1. Completes work on time.			
2. Demonstrates disruptive behaviors.			
3. Socially isolated.			
4. Socially accepted by peers.			

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCE TEACHER: _____ DATE: _____

REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHER: _____

STUDENT: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
1. Completes work on time.			
2. Demonstrates disruptive behaviors.			
3. Socially isolated.			
4. Socially accepted by peers.			

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #10

Activity:

Resource lists

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To inform parents of resources available in the school and community.

Description:

List of related school and community services is compiled and sent home to parents.

Implementation:

1. Determine school staff and personnel in the building and corporation who relate to student (superintendent, principals, attendance officers, food service, nurse, transportation director, counselors, home-school advisers, clinicians).
2. Compile a list of names, titles, duties, work address, and work telephone numbers of appropriate personnel.
3. Determine community resources available (mental health centers, counselors, United Way agencies, juvenile office, child protective services, welfare, community youth officers).
4. Compile a list with names, titles, duties, work address, and work telephone numbers of above positions.
5. Mail the combined lists to all parents.

Evaluation:

Parent feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Be sure to include only work telephone numbers and addresses.

Teacher-Initiated One-Way Information Sharing

Activity #11

Activity:

Parent library

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To make available current reading materials to parents.

Description:

Materials are collected and made available to parents on a check-out basis.

Implementation:

1. Secure reading materials from various sources (public and university libraries, state agencies, other staff members).
2. Review materials and develop a brief summary of each, listing bibliographic information and any specific areas of interest.
3. Include location of materials listed and cost.
4. Compile information into a reading list and send home with students.

Evaluation:

Parents' use of the available materials.

Helpful hints:

1. Don't overwhelm parents by making them feel obligated to read whole books; may want to suggest small sections.
2. Make sure to have a variety of resource readings.
3. Make sure you are familiar with the material before adding it to the list.
4. Make additions to the list when appropriate.
5. Keep material current (magazine articles, pamphlets, etc).

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #1

Activity:

Initiating a conference

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective of the activity:

To initiate a conference.

Description:

Teacher arranges a conference with a parent.

Implementation:

1. Determine when conference is necessary.
2. Write agenda.
3. Collect documentation.
4. Contact parent and document.
5. Schedule conference when convenient for parent and school personnel.
6. Notify related school personnel when appropriate.

Evaluation:

Parent attendance at conference.

Helpful hints:

1. Positive conferences should be included during the school year.
2. Conferences should immediately follow specific behavioral incidents.
3. Conferences should be arranged at the onset of problems rather than when they reach crisis level.
4. Follow-up with a telephone call if parents fail to attend the conference.
5. Preparing an agenda for the conference will save time and will assure that behavioral and academic concerns are discussed.

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #2

Activity:

Information sharing during conferences

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To share information concerning the student and their progress with parents.

Description:

Teacher discusses and shares information with parents which will lead to more effective program.

Implementation:

1. Arrange the setting with all participants in equal roles. Determine who will participate.
2. Introduce related personnel if necessary.
3. State purpose of meeting.
4. Begin on a positive note.
5. Share concerns with parents.
6. Share documentation.
7. Discuss parent concerns.
8. Discuss alternative for problem resolution.
9. Develop plan of action.
10. Summarize conference and parents rights.
11. Ask participants to summarize their part of the plan of action.
12. Arrange for follow-up contact.

Evaluation:

Parent feedback and follow-through.

Helpful hints:

1. Listen to parent concerns.
2. Ask questions.
3. Make no assumptions; enter the conference with an open mind.
4. Be alert to when to stop the conference and reschedule with additional information or support personnel.

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #3

Activity:

Sharing information during IEP conferences

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To share information concerning student's progress with the parents.

Description:

Teacher shares data concerning IEP goals and objectives.

Implementation:

1. Plan the setting with all participants in equal roles.
2. Generate a file for each student including samples of daily work, tests, daily logs, etc.
3. Introduce related personnel.
4. Explain purpose of meeting and intended outcome.
5. Open discussion in a positive way.
6. Review parent rights and ask for questions.
7. Review present levels on current IEP through documentation.
8. Discuss parents' perceptions of progress.
9. Continue with development of new IEP.
10. Summarize the conference and the components of the new IEP.

Evaluation:

Parent participation and feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Begin and end on a positive note.
2. Open the discussion with behavioral goals and objectives.
3. Listen - avoid monopolizing the conversation.
4. Respectfully acknowledge parent input.

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #4

Activity:

Brown Bag Luncheon

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To provide nonstressful interaction between parents and teacher.

Description:

Parents and teacher bring sack lunch and eat together.

Implementation:

1. Determine most appropriate time, date, and location.
2. Choose a key topic to discuss (suggestions: ways to promote communication with regular educators, teenagers and responsibilities, problems with babysitters, stigma of being a "special" parent).
3. Invite parents; stress that the activity is not mandatory and that all parents are invited.
4. Introduce parents to each other.
5. Conduct activity.
6. Follow-up with "glad you could make it" or "sorry to have missed you" note.
7. Be certain school administration approves of the activity, topic, date, and time.

Evaluation:

Participation and feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Have additional lunches available for persons who may have misunderstood directions or forgotten.
2. Make sure the setting is informal.
3. Encourage parents to take an active role in suggesting future activities.
4. Keep conversation light and evenly distributed to avoid any one parent monopolizing the conversation.
5. Avoid discussing particular behaviors or situations; be careful of confidentiality.
6. This activity format is also appropriate for an evening parent meeting.

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #5

Activity:

Mom's Night Out/ Dad's Night Out/ Parents' Night Out

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To provide nonstressful interaction between parents and teacher.

Description:

"Moms" ("Dads", parents) meet at nonschool setting for meal, refreshments, or interaction.

Implementation:

1. Select date and location (keep in mind transportation, financial demands of setting, etc.)
2. Invite parents; stress that the activity is not mandatory and that all parents are invited.
3. Introduce parents to each other.
4. Conduct activity.
5. Follow-up with "glad you could make it" or "sorry to have missed you" note.
6. Be certain the school administration approves the activity, date and location.

Variation:

1. May choose a key topic to discuss (suggestions: ways to promote communication with regular educators, teenagers and responsibilities, problems with babysitters, stigma of being a "special" parent).

Evaluation:

Parent participation and feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Make sure the setting is informal.
2. Encourage parents to take an active role in suggesting future activities.
3. Keep conversation light and evenly distributed to avoid any one parent monopolizing the conversation.
4. Avoid discussing particular behaviors or situations; be careful of confidentiality.

Teacher-Initiated Information Sharing

Activity #6

Activity:

Open House Reception

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To provide nonstressful interaction between parents and teachers.

Description:

Parents are invited to "open house" for the classroom.

Implementation:

1. Determine most appropriate time and date.
2. Invite parents; stress that the activity is not mandatory and that all parents are invited.
3. Display student work.
4. Introduce parents to each other.
5. Conduct activity if one is planned.
6. Follow-up with "glad you could make it" or "sorry to have missed you" note.
7. Be certain administration approves of the activity, date, and time.
8. Involve students by having them invite their parents, make refreshments, select which work will be displayed.

Evaluation:

Parent participation and feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Make sure all students have work displayed.
2. Make sure the setting is informal.
3. Keep conversation light and evenly distributed to avoid any one parent monopolizing the conversation.
4. Avoid discussing particular behaviors or situations; be careful of confidentiality.

Collaborative Support for School Program

Activity #1

Activity:

Parents as support.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents as part of the support system for their child.

Description:

Parents provide support for their child's educational program.

Implementation:

1. Develop rapport with parents.
2. Be responsive to parent needs and concerns.
3. Reinforce parents' proactive behavior.
4. Communicate consistently and openly.

Evaluation:

Parent support received.

Helpful hints:

1. Have realistic expectations for the amount of support parents can provide.
2. Communicate consistently and at the onset of programs, problems, concerns.
3. Recognize the needs and abilities of parents.

Activity #2

Activity:

Parents as implementors of IEP goals.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents in implementing IEP goals and objectives.

Description:

Parents are included in the IEP as co-implementors of goals and objectives.

Implementation:

1. Discuss with the parents those behaviors which occur both at home and school.
2. Cooperatively write goals and develop strategies to address the goals.
3. Explain implementation of strategies to parents.
4. Review strategies with parents to ensure understanding.
5. Develop documentation and communication system (i.e. traveling log or notebook, note system).
6. Cooperatively develop a reinforcement system.
7. Meet periodically to evaluate progress of the plan.

Evaluation:

Student progress.
Correspondence between parent and teacher.

Helpful hints:

1. Contingencies should be positive.
2. Follow-up telephone calls may be needed.
3. Be aware of potential need to modify goals and objectives.
4. Discontinue if this activity creates difficulties within the home setting.

Collaborative Support for School Program

Activity #3

Activity:

Parents as generalization agents.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents in generalizing the activity outside the school setting.

Description:

Parents are involved in maintaining behaviors and assisting in the generalization of behaviors outside the school setting.

Implementation:

1. Determine which behavioral goals and objectives have been accomplished in the school setting and should be targeted for the home and community.
2. Schedule conference with parents and other appropriate personnel.
3. Describe current level of behavior at school and contingencies applied.
4. Develop plan for applying consistent contingencies in the home.
5. Meet with the student to discuss the plan.
6. Develop a documentation and communication system between parents and teacher.
7. Meet periodically to evaluate progress.

Evaluation:

Student progress.
Correspondence between teacher and parent.

Helpful hints:

1. Positive contingencies should be applied.
2. Consistency between home and school should be emphasized.
3. Be aware of parents' skills and abilities in working with their child (parent resources, family dynamics, willingness to follow-through).

Activity #1

Activity:

Parents as teachers of mini-courses or leisure activities (sports, crafts, cooking, or hobbies).

Target audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Description:

Parents bring some area of expertise into the classroom to share with students.

Implementation:

1. Send out an interest survey sheet or letter to parents to determine parent willingness to share interests, hobbies, talents and to work with a small group.
2. Meet with the parent to discuss the details of the course (ex: how many days needed, dates, information to be given to students before hand, costs, etc.).
3. Introduce the students to the topic being taught by the parent and present introductory activities if needed. Reinforce proper rules of student conduct.
4. Parent presents course.
5. After parent presentation, complete any necessary follow-up activities.
6. Send parent letter of appreciation.

Evaluation:

Parent response and satisfaction of the experience.
Student response.
Evaluation from may be used if appropriate.

Helpful hints:

1. Review the activity thoroughly; parent may have too much or too little information for the time allotted for the course.
2. Assess the goals of the mini-course.
3. Ensure that the parent is familiar with the building and surroundings.
4. Be sure the principal and necessary personnel are informed of parent participation.

Activity #2

Activity:

Parent Career Day.

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Description:

Parents share their careers with students.

Implementation:

1. Send out an interest survey sheet or letter to parents to determine parent willingness to share information about their careers with a small group.
2. Meet with the parent to discuss the details of the talk (ex: time allotted, date, information to be given students before career day).
3. Introduce the students to the topic being taught by the parent and present introductory activities if needed. Reinforce proper rules of student conduct.
4. Parent presents talk.
5. After parent presentation, complete any necessary follow-up activities.
6. Send parent letter of appreciation.

Evaluation:

Parent response and satisfaction of the experience.
Student response.
Evaluation form may be used if appropriate.

Helpful hints:

1. Review the talk with the parent thoroughly; parent may have too much or too little to say for the allotted period.
2. Ensure that the parent is familiar with the building and surroundings.
3. Be sure the principal and necessary personnel are informed of parent participation.

Activity #3

Activity:

Parents as tutors.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary | Middle/Junior High | Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents as tutors.

Description:

Parents tutor other students in the classroom.

Implementation:

1. Contact principal, supervisor, or other appropriate person to determine corporation's policy on parents working in classrooms on a consistent basis.
2. Screen parents' skills.
3. Send out an interest survey sheet or letter to determine parent interest.
4. Follow-up initial letter with personal telephone call to discuss requirements of tutoring and schedule small group meeting.
5. Meet personally with parents to discuss duties and requirements of tutoring.
6. Conduct training session to make parents aware of classroom rules, structure, contingencies, confidentiality, and basic instructional techniques.
7. Schedule parent tutors.
8. Supervise tutors.
9. Provide for communication between tutors and teacher.

Evaluation:

Student progress.
Feedback from tutors.

Helpful hints:

1. Be sensitive to parents' feelings when screening for potential tutors.
2. Emphasize that parents must be able to participate on a regularly scheduled basis.
3. Avoid having parents tutor their own child.
4. Ensure confidentiality of students.

Activity #4

Activity:

Parents as helpers on field trips.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents 1:1 | Small Group 2-6

Levels:

Elementary | Middle/Junior High | Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents in assisting in activities outside the classroom.

Description:

Parents accompany teacher and student on field trip.

Implementation:

1. Select parents to attend field trip who would enhance the activities involved and demonstrate responsibility.
2. Contact appropriate parents.
3. Meet with parents to familiarize them with rules and duties.
4. Express appreciation for parent assistance.

Evaluation:

Student response.
Parent-teacher discussion of the trip.
Observation.

Helpful hints:

1. Know strengths and limitations of parents.
2. Anticipate problems involving parent/student personalities.
3. Emphasize punctuality and responsibilities.

Activity #5

Activity:

Parent as room helpers.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents in an active role in classroom activities.

Description:

Parents assist teacher with routine classroom duties (collecting money, running office machines, bulletin boards).

Implementation:

1. Determine school policy concerning room helpers.
2. Send out interest survey.
3. Collect and evaluate responses to survey.
4. Familiarize parents with the various duties.
5. Parents select duties which they will perform.
6. Discuss expectations and responsibilities of duty.

Evaluation:

Observation.
Parent response.
Student response.

Helpful hints:

1. Be aware of parents strengths and limitations.
2. Have realistic expectations for parents.
3. Make expectations clear and concise.
4. Reinforce parents.
5. Be aware of confidentiality.
6. Assign parent to classroom other than their child's.

Activity #6

Activity:

Parents as room parents.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents in the special occasions of the classroom.

Description:

Parents assist with special occasions within the classroom.

Implementation:

1. Check teacher handbook or school policy book concerning room parents.
2. Be sure you discuss the room parent program with the school administration.
3. Send out interest survey (see attached form).
4. Collect and evaluate responses to survey.
5. Contact interested parents by telephone or letter.
6. Acquaint parents with the names of other room parents (see attached form).
7. Designate a chairperson for room parents.

Evaluation:

Parent responses and feedback.
Observation.

Helpful hints:

1. Be aware of parent personality for the unity of the group.
2. Be sensitive to financial status of parents when planning special activities.
3. Make sure parents are aware of any student allergies.
4. Be aware of student confidentiality.
5. Be sure the Room Parent Program is accepted practice in your building.

REQUEST FOR ROOM PARENTS

ROOM_____

DATE_____

Dear Parents:

Each year our class has room parents. These people are usually involved in the following school projects:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

If you would like to be a room parent this year, please fill in and return the bottom part of this form.

Sincerely,

_____

Teacher

Yes, I can be a room parent this year.

_____

Name

_____

_____

Phone

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ROOM PARENTS

ROOM_____

DATE_____

Dear Parents:

The room parents for this year have been selected. If you wish to help them or have questions about our projects, please contact them.

1. _____ _____ _____
Name Address Phone

2. _____ _____ _____
Name Address Phone

3. _____ _____ _____
Name Address Phone

_____
Teacher

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Activity #7

Activity:

Parents as partners of parents new to special education.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To involve parents as partners of parents new to special education.

Description:

The teacher selects a small number of positive parents who are willing to function as partners to parents who are new to special education.

Implementation:

1. Select parents for partners who have a positive, realistic approach to special education.
2. Meet with parents to discuss their willingness to participate as a parent partner.
3. Discuss your expectations as a parent partner of parents.
4. Brief parents concerning anticipated questions from new parents about the teacher's personality and the instructional program.
5. Set guidelines for parents partner/new parent contact.
   a. new parents with concerns or questions may be given the telephone number of a preselected parent partner.
   b. teachers need to be aware of parent personalities when matching parents.
6. Set limitations for parent partner/new parent relationship.

Evaluation:

Parent feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Alert parent partners to possible uncomfortable questions.
2. Be aware of the need to possibly terminate relationships when they become unhealthy.
3. Parent partners should be aware of personal limitations.

Activity # 1

Activity:

Parent support group development.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Description:

Establishment of group for parent to gain social and emotional support and information sharing.

Implementation:

1. Check school administrative policy concerning teacher involvement in establishing a parent support group.
2. Survey parent population as to interest in a local support group.
3. Review surveys and select those parents who show interest, positive concern, and leadership qualities.
4. Contact the small preselected group and set-up a meeting.
5. Mutually establish goals and objectives of group.
6. Explain to parents that it is their group and you are there as a resource.
7. Give parents a list of selected ideas as suggestions for meeting topics (see following sheet).
8. Give parents names of other support groups in surrounding areas.
9. Give parents list of guidelines (see following sheet).
10. Discuss mode of operations (location, time, frequency of meetings, agendas, method of communication of support group meetings to other special needs parents).

Evaluation:

Parent feedback.
Attendance at meetings.

Helpful hints:

1. Remind parents that the teacher is a resource, not the group leader.
2. Input from all parents should be actively sought.

Guidelines for Support Groups

1. Remember the committee's purpose and objectives. Stick with the task at hand.

2. Remember that people's attitudes toward handicaps change slowly. Be patient.

3. Be confident in the committee's ability to accomplish the assigned task. Approach the task positively.

4. Start small. Take one step at a time.

5. Function within the system. Become an integral part of the classroom or school.

6. Seek financial, administrative, informational, and other assistance when necessary.

7. Use committee expertise at home first. Once the task is accomplished, the committee can help other schools, classrooms, and communities.

8. Do not impede progress by becoming unnecessarily aggressive or antagonistic. However, do not be too passive.

9. Caution against monopolizing conversation.

(from Bauer, A. M. & Shea, T. M. (1987). Teaching children and youth with behavior disorders. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.)

Selected Ideas for Support Group Meetings

1. Arrange speakers on topics of interest to members.
2. Train in particular educational or parenting skills.
3. Establish "rap" groups for parents.
4. Organize social groups for parents.
5. Organize a resource network (newsletter, telephone hotline, list of services, list of babysitters).
6. Arrange visits to other educational programs.
7. Represent parents' concerns about local school district practices and develop strategies.
8. Sponsor social or recreational programs for youngsters or young adults with disabilities.

(from Shaw, K. (1986). The Special Education Handbook. New York: Columbia University).

Activity #2

Activity:

Training parents individually to work with their children.

Target Audience:

Individual Parents
1:1

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To help parents positively change their child's behavior.

Description:

Parents are trained to plan strategies to change their child's behavior at home.

Implementation:

1. Send introductory letter home to inform parents of the available training opportunity.
2. Call parents who have responded to the letter and arrange a personal conference.
3. Conference with parents to determine degree and variety of concerns.
4. Establish priority of needs.
5. Introduce adaptive behavior techniques to be used based on identified parent concerns.
6. Schedule additional meetings to deal with targeting behavior, charting, planning new strategies, and evaluating progress.

Evaluation:

Parent response.
Student behavioral progress at home and in the school.
Observation.

Helpful hints:

1. Establish frequency of meeting.
2. Provide positive feedback to parents for their effort.
3. Don't use jargon when orienting parents to behavior modification program. Keep it in simple terms.
4. Provide information to parents for supplemental services that may be needed.

Target behavior _____

Observer's name _____ Child observed _____

Day or Date	Time		Antecedents	Consequences	Applied Interventions	Comments
	Begins	Ends				

FIGURE 6-5
Behavior Log Form

Source: Parents and teachers of exceptional students: A handbook for involvement. Shea & Bauer, (1985). p. 169

Parent Training

Activity #3

Activity:

To initiate small group instruction.

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary | Middle/Junior High | Secondary

Objective:

To initiate cohesive and positive interaction within parent groups.

Description:

Provides parent training leader activities to follow when initiating small group discussion.

Implementation:

1. Plan for setting (appropriate furniture, lighting, temperature, etc.)
2. Select ice breaker:

Option 1: Signature sheet. A form is made prior to the meeting which includes statements about people (i.e. "Find someone wearing the same color clothing as you", "Find someone who plays the piano"). Following each statement is a signature blank. As the group arrives, give a form to each individual. Encourage mixing and meeting new people, and getting as many unique signatures as possible.

Option 2: Bingo Card. Make a card containing 12 to 24 squares. Ask each member to fill each blank with a signature. Variation: include a letter in each blank; signature must begin with the letter.

Option 3: Scrambled name tags. Make up name tags with first name letters out of order. Have members try to figure out each name as they talk to the person.

Option 4: Who am I? Attach a piece of paper with the name of a famous person on the back of each person. Members go from person to person asking questions until they determine who they are.

Option 5: Dyad introductions. Have every two members talk together, with the idea that they will introduce each other. Specific interview questions may be provided.

Option 6: I've got a secret. After members have become acquainted, each member writes a secret on a piece of paper. The pieces of paper are collected, read one at a time, and the group tries to guess who has that secret.

Option 7: Self-introductions. Include a topic such as, "My secret hiding place was..." or "What I liked best about school was..."

Option 8: Value clarification. Members write the first thing about themselves which comes to their mind. Members may also fold a paper in half, and on one side write what they do in actuality as opposed to what they would do if they could.

3. Plan refreshments.
4. Develop agenda (prepare presentation) including a clear description of expectations for the group.
5. Greet each parent as he or she arrives.
6. Implement icebreaker.
7. Conduct group.
8. Note parents who attend.
9. Evaluate activity.

Evaluation:

Parent participation.

Helpful hints:

1. Be flexible and responsive to the group.
2. Redirect the group to the task or topic.
3. Use handouts, transparencies, and hands-on activities.
4. Rehearse presentation or agenda.
5. Remember to review presentations.

(Icebreakers are from Berger, E. H. (1981). Parents as partners in education. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby.)

Parent Training

Activity #4

Activity:

Roles in group discussion.

Target Audience:

Small Group	Large Group
2-6	7+

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To make parents aware of the roles in group discussion.

Description:

Parents become aware of the criteria for group discussion and roles which facilitate group participation.

Implementation:

1. Prepare transparencies which follow.
2. Open group meeting.
3. Present transparencies as a basis for discussion. Be ready with examples.

Evaluation:

Parent participation and feedback.

Helpful hints:

1. Some parents may feel that they are being criticized when less productive roles are discussed.
2. Leader should make participants aware that one person may fit several roles.

(transparencies are based on information from Berger, E. (1981). Parents as partners in education. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby)

Transparency

Criteria for Group Communication

1. Be ready to ask questions and share your ideas.

2. Once an idea is shared, it become's the group's to discuss and consider. Don't feel obligated to defend it.

3. Speak freely and communicate your feelings.

4. Listen with consideration.

5. Accept others in the interchange of ideas.

6. Engage in friendly disagreements.

7. Be sincere and communicate with trust.

8. Allow and promote individual freedom. Encourage creativity and individuality.

9. Work hard, support others, and focus on the task at hand.

Transparency

Group Roles

Constructive Roles	Destructive Roles
Clarifier	Dominator
Encourager	Negativist
Harmonizer	Aggressor
Listener	Playboy
Follower	Blocker
Tension Breaker	Competitor
Standard Setter	Deserter
Observer	Monopolizer
Recorder	
Information Seeker	

Parent Training

Activity #5

Activity:

Leading small group instruction.

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

To present guidelines for small group instruction.

Description:

Steps to facilitate group interaction are presented.

Implementation:

(based on information from Berger, E. H. (1981). Parents as partners in education. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby).

1. Have a clear understanding of the topic for the meeting.
2. Prepare materials.
3. Read background information for group.
4. Prepare a list of questions to keep discussion going.
5. Plan an interesting introduction or activity to begin the group.
6. Keep the discussion on track.
7. Be alert to adjust agenda to the needs of the group.
8. Keep your personal view out of the group discussion.
9. Point out any omitted viewpoints.
10. Promote positive interaction.
11. Summarize about every 10 minutes.
12. Call attention to unanswered questions for later study.

Evaluation:

Parent participation.

Helpful hints:

1. Be prepared.
2. Be flexible.
3. Watch for dominating or withdrawing parents.

Parent Support Organization

Activity #1

Activity:

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting - S. T. E. P.

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

Parent training.

Description:

STEP is a structured curriculum that focuses on communication and behavioral changes within the parent/child relationship. STEP may utilize a formal presentation followed by short discussion or an open discussion format. Cassettes, trainers and parent manuals are used.

Implementation:

1. Obtain administrative approval to implement the program.
2. Obtain permission and training in the use of the program.
3. Order sufficient materials.
4. Select parent group.
5. Contact parents concerning time, place, etc.
6. Express appreciation for participation.

Evaluation:

Behavioral changes within the parent/child relationship.

Helpful hints:

1. Recognize limitations of parents.
2. Be well trained in the program.
3. Written communication skills of at least fifth grade level are needed.

STEP is available through American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, MN 55014.

Parent Support Organization

Activity #2

Activity:

Parent Effectiveness Training - P.E.T.

Target Audience:

Small Group
2-6

Levels:

Elementary Middle/Junior High Secondary

Objective:

Parent training.

Description:

PET focuses on active listening, changing behavior by changing the environment, parent-child conflicts, parental power, and no lose methods for solving conflict.

Implementation:

1. Obtain administrative approval to implement the program.
2. Obtain permission and training to use the program.
3. Order sufficient books and materials.
4. Select members for the parent group.
5. Determine convenient times for meeting.
6. Express appreciation for participation.

Evaluation:

Behavioral changes within the parent/child relationship.

Helpful hints:

1. Relatively sophisticated written language and conceptual skills are required.
2. Trainer may need to explain vocabulary.

PET Information, Effective Training Associates, Inc., 531 Stevens Avenue, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

Suggested Reading List for Parents

Axline, V. M. (1969). Dibs: In search of self. New York: Ballentine Books.

Briggs, D. C. (1970). Your child's self-esteem. New York: Doubleday.

Button, A. D. (1969). The authentic child. New York: Random House.

Dreikurs, R. (1964). Children: The challenge. Des Moines, IA: Meredith Press.

Faber, A. & Mazlish, E. (1974). Liberated parents, liberated children. New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Farson, R. (1974). Birthrights. New York: Macmillan.

Ginott, H. G. Between parent and child. New York: Macmillan.

Ginott, H. G. Between parent and teenager. New York: Macmillan.

Glasser, W. (1969). Schools without failure. New York: Harper & Row.

Holt, J. (1964). How children fail. New York: Dell.

Hymes, J. L. (1963). The child under six. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Katz, R. L. (1963). Empathy. New York: The Free Press.

Putney, S. & Putney, G. (1964). The adjustment American. New York: Harper.

Resources for Parents

Teachers frequently serve as an informal clearing house for resources for parents of students with emotional handicaps. To make this complex role even more difficult, there is a wide variability in the number and sophistication of resources among communities. In order to assist parents in locating services, teachers should seek out their most helpful contact person in each of the following agencies. Giving parents a "name and a number" actively engages the parent in the problem solving/help seeking process. Teachers are advised to keep a card file in their rooms with a contact person, telephone number, address, and any essential information concerning the following typical community agencies.

Federal/State/County Agencies:

Office of Civil Rights
Family and Children Services
Department of Mental Health
Child Protective Services
Regional Office for Developmental Disabilities
Well Baby/Well Child Clinics
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Office of Protection and Advocacy
Office of Economic Opportunity
Aid to Dependent Children Office
Food Stamp Office
Department of the Aging
Juvenile Court Services
Child Health Programs
Department of Public Health
Social Security Commission
Legal Aid

Local/Regional General Assistance Agencies:

United Way
Salvation Army
Urban League
Community Chest
Food Banks

Local/Regional Private Foundations and Agencies:

Catholic Services
Jewish Community Services
Lions Club
Kiwanis Club
United Cerebral Palsy
Planned Parenthood/Family
Lutheran Family Services
YMCA/YWCA
Rotary
Shriners
St. Vincent de Paul Foundation
Planning Centers (Margaret Sanger Centers)

Local Support Agencies:

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Association for Retarded Citizens
Battered Wives/Children Centers
Compassionate Friends
Crisis Information Center
Child Abuse Hotline
Alcoholics Anonymous (Alanon, Alateen)
Respite Care Agencies
Parents Anonymous
Survivors of Suicide
Alliance for Mental Illness
Suicide Hotline
Substance Abuse Hotline

References

Abbott, G. (1980). Instructor's Big Book of Teacher Savers. New York: Instructor Magazine.

Bauer, A.M. & Shea, T.M. (1987). Teaching children and youth with behavior disorders. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Berger, E. H. (1981). Parents as partners in education. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby.

Coan, D. L. & Gotts, E. E. (1976). Parent education needs: A national assessment study. Charleston, WV: Appalacian Educational Laboratory, Inc. (ERIC Document #ED132-972).

Heward, W. L., Dardig, J. C. & Rossett, A. (1979). Working with parents of handicapped children. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Lillie, D. & Place, P. A. (1982). Partners. Dallas, TX: Scott Foresman.

Schultz, J. (1987). Parents and professionals in special education. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Shea, T. M. & Bauer, A. M. (1985). Parents and teachers of exceptional children: A handbook of involvement. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

OBJECTIVE SIX

Objective Six: To describe strategies for working with parents with whom collaborative relationships have been difficult to establish.

Workshop

Rationale

Teachers recognize the importance of working collaboratively with parents in the education of students with emotional handicaps. Occasionally, however, some relationships may be difficult to establish for any number of reasons. Maintaining positive attitudes toward parents in these situations can be difficult. In order to meet the student's educational and emotional needs, it is important for teachers to keep the door open. This open door provides the opportunity for increasing the positive involvement of parents in their child's education.

Objectives

The three objectives of this workshop are:

1. Teachers will recognize they will come into contact with parents with whom establishing a relationship will be difficult,

2. Teachers will learn strategies to help them work more effectively with parents with whom establishing a collaborative relationship has been difficult, and

3. Teachers will learn strategies to reduce their own frustration with the lack of collaboration in some teacher-parent relationships.

Overview

Narrative

I. Brainstorming activity:

To begin, please listen carefully to the following story. We will then talk about your feelings about this family.

Cindy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, are coming to school for the annual case review. Cindy is nine years old and in the fourth grade. She is in your resource room for students with emotional handicaps. This past year, Cindy has shown marked improvement in academics, self-esteem, and social skills within your classroom. She has not been successful in her regular classroom, primarily because she has not been able to complete the lengthy required daily tasks.

When the parents arrive for the annual case review, they seem angry and upset. They immediately begin arguing with each other about their daughter's continued participation in your program. The mother wants her daughter to remain in her present placement; the father feels you have coddled his daughter in the special classroom, and wants her in the "real world". He is demanding his daughter be retained in the regular fourth grade classroom next year with no special education programming. He becomes very angry with you when you do not automatically support his stand.

Questions: (record responses on transparency or blackboard)

1. How would you describe these parents?
2. How do you feel during and after this conference?
3. What might you tell your principal, consulting psychologist, and/or director about this family?

(Trainer note - be sure to communicate the purpose of this activity - to let teachers know how easy it is to attach negative labels to parents which can lead to a negative mind-set, hampering the development of a collaborative relationship.)

II. Basic reminders:

At this point, we need to review some concepts which are useful to keep in mind when establishing a positive climate to promote parent involvement:

1. Encourage a sense of mutual respect in the parent-teacher relationship.
2. Focus on the positive strengths of the child and parent.
3. Be realistic about each families' limitations as well as their resources.
4. Be sensitive to a family's unique sub-culture, value system, religious views, etc. Above all, don't always expect parents to agree with you.

III. Strategies:

In our attempts to promote positive climates, there are times when, as teachers, we still do not achieve the degree or type of parent involvement we believe will benefit the child. Let's turn now to a discussion of some specific concerns about parent behavior. We will also present some strategies which may be beneficial to use in maximizing opportunities for continued positive parent involvement.

We will discuss:

A. Dealing with angry parents.
B. Dealing with parents who need counseling.
C. Dealing with passive resistance from parents.
D. Dealing with parents with overwhelming demands.
E. Dealing with parents who have responsibilities which preclude involvement.
F. Dealing with parents who deny.
G. Dealing with parents who choose not to be involved.

A. Dealing with angry parents

Activity: Brainstorming

Have participants brainstorm things that make or have made them as teachers angry.

List on blackboard or overhead.

Have participants brainstorm things from their experience that make parents of students with emotional handicaps (or any students) angry. List.

Ask them to think about a time when a parent has been angry with them, their child, principal, the "system", etc.

Ask: Why was the parent angry? (ask for volunteers)
How did you feel? (ask for volunteers)

As a result of the display of anger, would you be more or less likely to welcome involvement of that parent in their child's program? (volunteers) Emphasize that many people are uncomfortable with others' anger and tend to want to avoid it or become angry themselves.

Narrative:

Anger is a very natural and common response to frustration. We all feel anger (as demonstrated in the last activity) and have expressed our anger in inappropriate ways (e.g. yelling, slamming doors, saying things we later regret). We have also used anger to motivate us to take assertive action to solve problems (e.g. a parent becomes angry about the extremely poor classroom facility for her child and calls the superintendent and school board members to demand improvements.)

We should not be surprised when parents become angry. But, we may need to battle our impulses to withdraw from the parent-teacher relationship or to become defensive and/or angry ourselves. Neither response will enhance the opportunity for continued positive parent involvement.

Instead, we can choose to view dealing with an angry parent as an opportunity to solve a problem of which we may not have been aware. Taking this view will probably help us keep in mind that an angry parent is a partner rather than an adversary in his/her child's educational program.

Strategies for dealing with angry parents:

Let's look at some steps teachers can take when dealing with angry parents. (Discuss each step while showing Overhead #1 and referring participants to Handout #1.)

1. Listen - use active listening skills (Reflect feeling aspect of parents' statements; do not put judgments on what the parent says, e.g. "It sound like you are angry that...")

2. Write down what they say - use pencil and paper to list complaints.

3. When they slow down, ask them what else is bothering them - encourage them to get it all down.

4. Exhaust their list of complaints.

5. Ask them to clarify any specific complaints that are too general - ask for exact descriptions of complaints.

6. Show them the list and ask if it is complete - go through it together to be sure everything is there.

7. Ask them for suggestions for solving any of the problems that they've listed - they'll be more committed to using alternatives they've generated.

8. Write down the suggestions - again, get it in black and white where you both can see what has been said.

9. As much as possible, mirror their body posture during this process - a counseling technique that conveys "I'm with you". As they speak louder, you speak softer - a calming effect.

Don't

1. Argue - this only serves to escalate the conflict.

2. Defend or become defensive - the hardest thing not to do.

3. Promise things you cannot produce - if you cannot follow through, a loss of trust is the result.

4. Own the problems that belong to others - be confident that the parent has the ability to work through the problem.

5. Raise your voice - another possible cause for escalation.

6. Belittle or minimize the problem - if a parent has come to the school, it is a real concern for him/her.

You may find out that you can defuse the anger and resolve the problem by apologizing if the parent has a legitimate "gripe" about something for which you can take responsibility. After listening to the parent you may decide they have some ideas you feel may be very adaptable (e.g. using non-sweetened food reinforcers for their child in your classroom). You may find that in some instances parents are angry about situations out of both of your control. Expressing understanding of and empathy about their angry feeling, may enhance your relationship and maximize continued parent involvement (e.g. parent is angry that other children are making fun of the child when getting on the special education bus in his neighborhood).

However, after listening to the parents' feelings and thoughts, you may discover there are real conflicts in your views (e.g. going back to the angry parents described at the beginning of the workshop). You believe that the child should not be retained and placed in a regular classroom with no special programming; the father believes this is what should be done).

When this occurs, the following "no-lose" method can be helpful in resolving the conflict. "No-lose" refers to the idea that by using this approach to reach a compromise which with both parties can live, neither party wins or loses; hence the relationship based on mutual respect and a desire to be partners is enhanced. (Discuss each step while showing Overhead #2 and referring participants to Handout #2.)

<u>No Lose Method of Conflict Resolution</u> (from Kroth)

The no-lose method requires that the persons involved in a possible conflict situation will be able to join together in problem solving. Active listening is necessary in order to understand the feelings or needs of the other person. Active listening will allow the other person to openly express feeling and to release pent-up feelings. Active listening tells the other person that the suggestions or proposed solutions were heard and were accepted and wanted. The "I messages" are important so that the other person knows how you feel without putting that person down or blaming them. "I messages" need to be expressed in order to define the limits involved in the possible conflict situation.

The six steps in the no-lose conflict resolution method are:

1. Identifying and defining the conflict.

   The two or more parties want to become involved in identifying and defining the conflict. The time and place should be convenient. All persons must recognize that there is, in fact, a problem to be solved.

2. Generating possible solutions.

   This step has all parties generate as many solutions as possible. It is important to accept each suggestion without evaluating or putting it down.

3. Evaluating alternative solutions.

   All persons participate in the evaluation of all suggested solutions. All persons involved should remember to state "I messages" as the number of possible solutions narrows (i.e. I believe that... In my opinion...)

4. Deciding on the best solution.

   If the discussion up to this point has been honest and open to all suggestions, this step should not be too difficult. As the final choice narrows, all should participate and contribute. It should be remembered and agreed that the final decision is open and can be changed. Before the solution is written down, make an effort to assure that all parties understand what is being agreed upon.

5. Implementing the decision.

   After a decision is reached, there may be items that need to be spelled out in detail before the final decision is implemented. Some of the minor details may be things such as "How often?" "On what days?" "What is the criterion for neatness?"

6. Following evaluation.

   After the solution agreement has been in effect for a specified time, there is a need to call all participants back together to evaluate the plan. Sometimes the plan may need modification.

   [As a final note, relate that local mental health centers, workshops at professional organization conferences, etc., often offer training in mediation, conflict resolution, etc., that may be useful skills for teachers.]

   <u>Tips for reducing teacher frustration</u>.

   Teachers need to remind themselves frequently:
   - Parents will have values, opinions, expectations, and goals that differ from those of the teacher.
   - Anger is normal, natural, and can be a very productive preliminary to problem-solving.
   - It is o.k. to make someone else angry.

B. Dealing with parents who need counseling

Activity - Brainstorm some signs, clues, situations that would suggest to a teacher that a parent needs counseling. List responses on the board or transparency. Be sure the list includes the following:

1. Indications of neglect or physical or sexual abuse of the child (this must be reported to the local child protection agency)
2. Indications that the parents have given up trying at home (e.g. "I can't do anything with him anymore. You do what you can, but I can't help").
3. When parents talk primarily about their own problems and needs and seem unable to focus on their child.
4. When the family system is dysfunctional, disordered, and it is a key factor in the child's problems.
5. When parents express much frustration, depression, or anger about not being able to control or change child's behavior at home.
6. When parents lack basic knowledge of child development and/or parenting skills.
7. When a parent seems isolated and lacks any support system.
8. When parents are so culturally different from their milieu that they do not know how to seek or reject vital social services.
9. When the parents contact the teacher for help and advice on family or child concerns that do not relate to the child's educational program.

Referral for Counseling:

1. Teachers must remember their role is being the child's teacher and not the family counselor. Most teachers do not have the needed training and/or experience to be able to effectively and ethically provide counseling for families. It is easy and convenient for many needy parents to become too dependent on their child's teacher to solve their problems. In these situations parents need to be linked to services that will help develop long-lasting coping strategies, functional communication, and other skills to reduce dependency on others and improve the quality of life.

2. Before making referrals for counseling, teachers should:

   a. Become familiar with local counseling resources by visiting them, obtaining literature, and talking to other professionals who work with each agency. Find out which agencies serve which types of clients, problems, or groups, etc. For example, find out where parents can receive group parent training. Be prepared to recommend the parents make contact with a particular agency and counselor.
   b. Learn the fee structure, intake process, and "realities" involved so you can prepare parents about what to expect. This may help reduce the parents' fear and reluctance.

3. When talking with a parent about counseling, do it gently and as a suggestion of a possible plan that may help the parent with the particular concern expressed directly (i.e. rather than saying, "you need counseling" say "counseling has been helpful for people in a similar situations." Remember, you cannot make a parent seek counseling).

4. Give suggestions of several places parents can receive the needed services.

5. Be prepared for resistance which may take the following forms:

   a. Denial that counseling is needed. Remember that many people feel that seeking counseling means assuming blame. Also counseling and mental health services have a negative connotation (crazy, mentally ill, etc.) for many people. A helpful strategy may be to keep focused on the child. For example, "Johnny's behavior and problems are sometimes tough for me to cope with at school. I know you find that at home, too. It might be helpful to have someone to ask for ideas to use in dealing with Johnny's behavior".
   b. Counseling can't help. It was tried before and it did no good. Parents need to be prepared for the counseling process by helping them understand that before any change can occur, a relationship based on trust must be established with the therapist. This phase of counseling can take several sessions or more. Sometimes, in addition, therapists and clients don't "click". Parents should be told they have every right to confront their counselor if they are dissatisfied and work out a plan of action which may include referral to another therapist. They need to know that this is acceptable.
   c. Spouse will not go. Inform them that both parents don't have to be involved for counseling to be beneficial.
   d. Can't afford counseling. Be knowledgeable about costs at various agencies, community/welfare agency resources, reduced fee structures, etc., to share with parents. Be sensitive to this as a legitimate concern for many people.

6. If you know parents need counseling, but they do not follow through on a referral and continue to call you for help, keep telling them who they need to call for help. Do not foster this continued dependency, relinquish it. Remember you are not a trained counselor.

7. Don't forget to reinforce parents who follow through with a referral for counseling and to express an interest in their progress.

C. Dealing with passive resistance from parents.

Let's start with an example. You as a teacher feel your parent-teacher conference has accomplished much. The parent(s) agree and support their child's educational program. They discuss their desire to follow through at home with some management techniques. All is right with the world. Within two weeks, it becomes very obvious that there has been no follow-through.

Passive resistance from parents can be a very frustrating experience for you as a teacher. The parent may be supportive of a follow-up plan developed at a conference and seem enthusiastic, but the result may be totally ignoring or even apparently undermining the plan. A parent may reject any or all recommendations. Take a minute or so right now to think about situations where you have experienced this type of situation. Are there other examples of passive resistance you can add?

Encourage the participants to list some strategies for dealing with passive resistance from parents. Be sure to include the following:

1. Make sure the parents and teacher both understand the purpose and outcomes of the conference. Restate, write down, arrange for follow-up, anything which ensures consensus and agreement. Include the student if appropriate.
2. Ask the parent for recommendations for participation in activities. Solicit as much input as possible during program planning.
3. If the parent will be conducting a joint activity in the home setting, make sure the strategies, directions are clear and understood by both. Is the task too complicated? Just as you might break a task into small components for your students, likewise consider doing this with a parent.
4. Set up a follow-up contact (e.g. at your meeting arrange for another meeting or telephone contact to further clarify, re-state, thank the parent for their active participation in their child's educational program.
5. Ask participants to add additional strategies.

Tips for reducing teacher frustration:

Deal with your frustration. Don't give up. Recognize that it takes time to get parents actively and constructively involved in the education of their child. Attempt to formulate reasons why the parent may be passively resistant. Write them down; develop strategies to effectively change them.

D. Dealing with parents with overwhelming demands.

Have you ever had a day where you have 15 items on your things to do list, and others are depending on your completing those tasks? The responsibility is sometimes frightening and overwhelming. Similarly, some parents are overwhelmed by personal, marital, and family problems and are unable to even think about their child's problem.

Picture yourself as a single parent who works full time, has two other children in addition to your child with an emotional handicap. There are child care arrangements, grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, transportation needs, financial burdens, and school requests for three children. A note from the teacher asking you to carry out some activity at home or to attend a conference to plan parent involvement activities may not be positively received. Can you think of parents with whom you have contact who seem overwhelmed? What are some clues which tell you the parent may be overwhelmed by outside demands?

(Generate some ideas at this point, e.g. obvious fatigue, number of children in family, marital status)

Possible strategies interacting with these parents are:

1. Be sensitive to those demands placed on all parents.
2. Be willing to listen to parents' difficulties. Realize that the student in your class is not their only responsibility.
3. Be flexible in re-arranging conferences to better suit parents schedules.
4. Be prepared to suggest supplemental services; i.e. social services, which could assist parent management responsibilities.
5. Be prepared to modify parent involvement expectations based on current information.

Tips for dealing with teacher frustration:

a. Attempt to list some concrete reasons as to why a parent did not attend a conference, (e.g. forgot, illness in the family, no transportation, no child care).
b. As a person, remember that personal problems sometimes take precedence and affect our routine day-to-day responsibilities.

E. Dealing with parents who have responsibilities which preclude involvement.

Sometimes parents, for a variety of reasons, simply cannot participate in any of the traditional parent-teacher involvement activities. Let's brainstorm and record what some of these circumstances might be. (e.g. father who travels from Sunday through Friday, a mother who is responsible for an elderly relative and can't leave him/her alone during the day, no telephone in the home, parents who have no access to any transportation and live in rural areas).

The important thing to remember is that there may be parents with responsibilities which preclude their active involvement.

Possible strategies for interacting with these parents are:

1. Remember just because a parent may appear disinterested by their non-participation, they are still concerned about their child. It does not mean they choose not to be involved.
2. Be creative! Think of some methods for involving parents which don't involve face-to-face meetings. Use a tape recorder to talk about their child. Ask the parent to tape a response back. If possible, videotape the child in the classroom.
3. Consider scheduling meetings at the parents' home.
4. Ask the parent for ways they can participate in their child's educational program.

Tips for reducing teacher frustration:

Use empathy. Think of how you might feel in the same situation. Use those feelings to help you accept the current situation. Remember the situation may change. Things may be different in the future. Continue to be positive and seek ways to involve parents.

F. Dealing with parents who deny.

Occasionally a teacher may work with parents who deny their child has problems or may blame the problems on former teachers, principals, etc.

Possible strategies for interacting with these parents are:

1. Don't argue or try to convince the parent that the child has problems.
2. Help increase their awareness by inviting parents to observe in the classroom, review test scores, look at completed assignments, etc.
3. Reframe the child's special program as an attempt to adapt to his needs, rather than as a result of his failure to behave or adjust adequately.
4. Continue to focus on the child's progress in order to decrease the parents defensiveness.

Tips for reducing teacher frustration:

Remind yourself that the parents need to blame others is very strong and serves a purpose in the family. Remember that the parents' perceptions of other peoples' responsibility for their child's problem may have some validity. Schools have frequently failed to meet the needs of emotionally handicapped students.

G. Dealing with parents who choose not to be involved.

Sometimes parents choose not to be involved in their child's educational program. Brainstorm and record some reasons why this may happen (e.g. parents who cannot deal with guilt or self-blame for child's problems; parents who have had very negative personal experiences in their own schooling; parents who are opposed to special programming for the child but feel forced by the spouse, teacher, or educational system to allow it).

Possible strategies for interacting with these parents are:

1. Keep the door open. Remain positive about the child, continue to send home notes about progress, etc. Continue to invite and welcome parent participation without becoming a pest.
2. Prepare videotape or audiotape of the child's school day to send home for parents to be able to "see" their child's progress.

Tips to reduce teacher frustration:

Remember, parents have the right to choose the level of involvement they will have in their child's program. There may be situations where no involvement by a parent at a given time may be better than coerced involvement. Parents' decision not to be involved does not mean they do not love their child or that they will never become involved.

IV. Application Activity.

The purpose of this activity is to practice using the knowledge we have gained during this workshop.

<To the trainer>: Divide the group in half. Assign each group the responsibility of developing role playing situations. One group will focus on parents who are angry; the other on parents who need counseling. Each of these groups should be divided into three or four persons. The subgroups should be comprised of two role-players: parent and teacher. The other will be a facilitator(s). The facilitator's role will be to keep the group on task and should observe and remind the role players to use the strategies suggested on the handouts and in the discussion. The groups should develop their own situations and practice the learned strategies. The trainer should also monitor each group.

After all the groups have developed a role play and have practiced, reconvene the large group and ask for volunteers from each group to demonstrate their role play.

After each demonstration, summarize the main points:

When working with angry parents:
1. stay calm yourself.
2. listen to and acknowledge parent concerns.
3. model appropriate problem-solving behavior.

When working with parents who need counseling:
1. don't push - suggest.
2. know your resources.
3. don't take on the role of counselor.

V. Summary

To optimize changes for truly collaborative relationship with parents, teachers need to:

1. Be sure to establish a positive climate and do all they can from the beginning to form a cooperative relationship and prevent anger, alienation, withdrawal of parents.

2. When problems arise in the collaborative relationships teachers should use strategies developed in this workshop to reduce problems and enhance parent involvement in their child's educational program.

3. If problems continue, teachers need to refrain from blaming parents or themselves and should continue to communicate with parents in a positive way to the extent possible so that the door will remain open for parents to increase their involvement. A referral to another agency for counseling, etc. would be appropriate.

Handout #1
Overhead #1

Tips for Dealing with Aggression

DO

_____ 1. Listen

_____ 2. Write down what they say

_____ 3. When they slow down, ask them what else is bothering them

_____ 4. Exhaust their list of complaints

_____ 5. Ask them to clarify any specific complaints that are too general

_____ 6. Show them the list and ask if it is complete

_____ 7. Ask them for suggestions for solving any of the problems that they've listed

_____ 8. Write down the suggestions

_____ 9. As much as possible, mirror their body posture during this process

_____ 10. As they speak louder, you speak softer

DON'T

_____ 1. Argue

_____ 2. Defend or become defensive

_____ 3. Promise things you can't produce

_____ 4. Own problems that belong to others

_____ 5. Raise your voice

_____ 6. Belittle or minimize the problem

- These behaviors take practice. Our first automatic reaction is almost always just the reverse of the way to defuse anger or hostility.

- Think about the times that you have been angry enough to become aggressive with someone you don't know well, like a clerk in a store or an attendant at a game, etc. It usually takes some time to "build up courage" to attack and often the person attacked cannot do anything about the situation. Parents and teachers sometimes find themselves in the same position. They would just like somebody out there to listen. You may be just catching the flack of the general frustration of someone who is unable to cope with the world at that time.

- Parents and teachers may have some real legitimate concerns that you can do something about immediately.

*UNM Institute for Parent Involvement, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1979.

Handout #2
Overhead #2

Six Steps of the No-Lose Method

STEP 1 IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE CONFLICT

STEP 2 GENERATE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

STEP 3 EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

STEP 4 DECIDE ON THE BEST ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION

STEP 5 WORK OUT WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION

STEP 6 FOLLOW-UP TO EVALUATE HOW IT WORKED

*GORDON, T. PARENT EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING. NEW YORK: PETER H. WYDEN, 1970.

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